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STUDIES IN THE *CONFESSIONS* OF ST. AUGUSTINE

BY

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"Ad Eum dilectione tendimus,
ut perveniendo quiescamus"
AUGUSTINE

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PREFACE

THE following " Studies " contain the substance of a series of lectures delivered at Keble College during Hilary term, 1919, in accordance with the terms of the " Pringle Stuart " Trust. I make no attempt to deal minutely or exhaustively with the *Confessions*; but certain aspects of that wonderful work are selected for comment, with a view to estimating the significance of St. Augustine, not as a pioneer in theology but as a leader of religion.

What has given the *Confessions* their place in the devotional literature of the world is the fact that they touch the heights and depths of a true religious experience. Their writer, sensitive as he was to the various intellectual influences of his time, yet set before himself, as the dominant aim of his life, the knowledge of God. The book may be of service to us, in our endeavour to probe the roots of that prevalent unrest and dissatisfaction which partly prompt, and partly hinder, the task of " reconstruction." Under Augustine's guidance we may learn to take into account more seriously the reality of evil; the presence of sin, and its pervasive power, in human life; the barrenness of any system of thought, political or intellectual, which ignores man's need of God in every sphere of his personal or social activity. And the chief lesson of the *Confessions* may perhaps be expressed in aphorisms taken from two writers, to both of whom the Church is greatly indebted:

" The spirit of Mysticism is the true and essential Christianity " (R. C. Moberly).

" Mysticism means for us the immediacy and reality of God in us " (W. P. Du Bose).

It is this point which I have specially emphasized in the concluding pages of this book.

For convenience' sake I append the full titles of some works to which frequent reference is made :

A. Harnack, *History of Dogma* [E. Tr.], cited as *H.D.*

A. Harnack, *Augustin's Konfessionen :* ein Vortrag (Giessen, 1888), cited as *A.K.*

Louis Bertrand, *Saint Augustin* (Paris, 1913), cited as " Bertrand."

G. Boissier, *La Fin du Paganisme*, liv. 3, ch. 3, cited as " Boissier."

T. R. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, ch. 9, cited as " Glover."

J. Gibb and W. Montgomery, *The Confessions of Augustine*, [in " Cambridge Patristic Texts "], cited as " G and M."

F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, vol. i, cited as *M.E.R.*

R. L. O.

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STUDIES IN THE *CONFESSIONS* OF ST. AUGUSTINE

I

THE CAREER OF AUGUSTINE: TO HIS DEPARTURE FROM AFRICA

THE work to which St. Augustine gives the title of *Confessions* is in several respects unique; but its primary interest is obviously autobiographical. In his *Retractations* he tells us plainly that "the first ten books are concerned with himself: the remaining three with Holy Scripture." He wrote the work most probably in his forty-sixth year, some twelve years after his conversion, when he had been a bishop for about four years; and towards the end of his life he refers to it as being of all his writings the most popular.[1] Yet just as Augustine himself is to most people nowadays little more than a famous name, so we may suspect that to many, if not most, educated people, his book is known only by hearsay. M. Louis Bertrand in his fascinating sketch of Augustine observes that for the general reader this great saint is "hidden behind a perfect rampart of print": but the *Confessions* ought not to share the fate of Augustine's other writings. They were written under circumstances not altogether unlike our own: in an age of vast convulsions and portentous new beginnings: an age in which men's minds were still hesitating between things old and new, in faith and religion, in moral standards, in social and political ideals. And in Augustine's personal history, inextricably involved as it was in the vicissitudes of a decaying Empire and a moribund civilization, we

[1] *Retract.* 2. 6. 1.

may perhaps recognize the counterpart of a world crisis. In any case, what brings Augustine near to us, and imparts to his *Confessions* a living and enduring interest, is the fact that it is the record of a soul's tragedy. His spiritual conflicts and aspirations are in great measure common to men of every race and period. In one of his three dialogues *de contemptu mundi*—in which Augustine is introduced as an interlocutor—Petrarch exclaims, "Whenever I read your *Confessions*, I experience two contrary affections—hope and fear, sometimes not unmingled with tears; since I account myself to be reading the narrative, not of another man's pilgrimage, but of my own" (*non alienam sed propriae meae peregrinationis historiam*).[1] Others doubtless, belonging to later periods of Western civilization could bear similar testimony. Our age, like Augustine's, is one of culture so highly developed that, while the legitimate craving for pleasure has been enhanced, the causes and occasions of suffering have been indefinitely multiplied. Moreover, beneath the tumult of wars and revolutions, the triumphant claims of advancing science, the din of political and religious controversy, the turmoil of industrial strife and unrest, the endless strife of tongues in the Babel of modern life—the cry of the human heart for guidance, for cleansing, for renewal, for strength, for "the things belonging to the Spirit," makes itself continually heard. "Man wanders unsatisfied," says a thoughtful writer, "in the spacious palaces of his new material splendour."[2] "Unsatisfied"—and therefore ready to listen to the appeal of one who has been brought out of darkness into light. Augustine records the experience of a soul seeking after God and finding in Him the fulfilment of every aspiration, the answer to every perplexity, the "fresh springs" which can make all human things new. "To whom," he writes, "do I relate this story? Not to Thee, O my God; but in Thy presence I relate it to my kindred, the race of mankind, howsoever small may be that portion

[1] *de contemptu mundi*, dial. i. Cp. Bertrand, p. 8; "L'âme occidentale est marquée à l'empreinte de la sienne."

[2] C. G. Masterman, *The Condition of England*, p. 222.

of it which lights upon my work. And wherefore? Simply that I, and all who read this narrative, may together reflect from how deep a depth we must needs cry unto Thee."[1] He makes his confession, he elsewhere says, in the ears of believing sons of men, the companions of his joy, the sharers of his mortality, his fellow-citizens and fellow-pilgrims, preceding, accompanying, or following him on the road of life. "These be thy servants," he cries, "my brethren whom Thou willest to be Thy sons; my masters whom Thou biddest me serve; . . to such, then, will I disclose not merely what I was, but what I now am and may yet become . . . In this spirit let me be listened to."

Augustine's conversion, indeed, concerns us as forming an epoch in the spiritual history of mankind. His book connects itself with both past and future; in a real sense it gathered up the spiritual experience of the ancient world: the religious thought of the Psalmists, of Plato, of the Stoics, of St. Paul; while to a large extent it moulded the form and even the language in which Christian devotion still finds expression. We may then regard the *Confessions* as a veritable religious classic which can never altogether lose its power of appeal; and there are many who could probably echo the declaration of St. Teresa that the study of this book was a turning point in her life. She says that when she read Augustine's account of the child's voice singing in the garden *Tolle lege*, "it was just as if the Lord called me."[2]

Such is the general character of the book which is to form the subject of our present studies. And inasmuch as it professes to be primarily an autobiography, we may begin by briefly describing Augustine's career as narrated by himself. Subsequently we will consider the main influences which acted on his mind and character, and attempt to deal with certain aspects of his book which perhaps deserve more attention than they have hitherto received.

Aurelius Augustinus was born at Thagaste in Numidia,

[1] *Conf.* 2. 3. 5. Cp. 10. 4. 5. 6; 11. 1. 1.

[2] From St. Teresa's Autobiography *ap.* Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, p. 219.

November 13, 354, and he died during the siege of Hippo by the Vandals, August 28, 430. The fact that, in spite of a somewhat dissipated youth, he lived to be seventy-six shows the vitality of his constitution.

The first book of the *Confessions* gives an account of his parentage, infancy and boyhood. Of his father Patricius he has little to tell. Thagaste was a second-rate *municipium* of some commercial importance, owing to its situation at a junction of several great Roman roads; and since Patricius, though not wealthy, apparently belonged to the *ordo decurionum*, he must certainly have been owner of a tolerable estate. He remained a pagan till within a short time of his death, and was evidently a man of somewhat loose habits and choleric temper (9. 9. 19). His wife Monnica, on the other hand, was by family tradition and upbringing a catholic Christian [1]; and though she was married to Patricius at an early age (probably an arrangement *de convenance*), she was able by her tact and self-control to exercise a real influence on her undisciplined husband. Augustine observes that they lived *valde concorditer:* and only on her deathbed did Monnica abandon her desire that she and Patricius might finally rest in the same grave. They had three children—two sons, Navigius and Augustine, and a daughter whose name is not recorded, and who ultimately became superior of a convent near Hippo. Augustine, perhaps the youngest of the three, naturally has much to tell of his mother. In Book IX. he relates some incidents of her early life: how she was committed to the care of an old female slave who subjected her to a strict but wholesome discipline: how, quite in her girlhood, she insensibly fell into a habit of excess in wine, of which she was effectually cured by the ill-natured gibe of a quarrelsome maid-servant; how she learned by experience so wisely to humour her husband that she gradually won his respect and affection; and ultimately

[1] Little is known of the origins of North African Christianity. See Abp. Bernard in *The Early History of the Church and Ministry*, essay iv, pp. 217 foll. It is noteworthy that mixed marriages between Christians and Pagans were not uncommon at this period.

induced him to embrace the faith of Christ. In a Yorkshire churchyard, there is an epitaph which, if I recollect rightly, runs as follows : " She was—but words fail to tell what she was. Think what a good woman should be and she was that ! " Augustine's tribute to his mother's memory virtually sums up the excellences of a good woman. " She was indeed the servant of Thy servants. All who knew her praised, honoured, loved Thee in her because she felt Thy presence in her heart . . . She had been the wife of one husband ; she had requited her parents ; had governed her house piously ; was well-reported of for good works ; had brought up children of whom she travailed in birth anew, as often as she saw them go astray from Thee . . . She so tended us " (he is speaking of the little community at Cassiciacum), " as if she were the mother of us all ; so served us as if she had been the daughter of all." Monnica was by no means faultlessly virtuous or wise ; she had a touch of African fanaticism ; she cherished some worldly ambitions, and in her upbringing of Augustine made some grave mistakes which the providence of God overruled for good. But at least she taught him to pray and to hold in reverence the sacred name of Christ. Moreover, he probably inherited from her a certain tenacity of purpose which in the long run triumphed over hindrances. Certainly her influence kept alive in him a capacity for faith which was destined in due time to lift him into the fellowship *of the saints in light.*

Augustine recalls certain incidents of his early childhood, mainly because they illustrate the overruling care of God, and also perhaps because they suggest different lines of moral reflexion. Thus he traces the first beginnings of sin in infancy. He tells us how the temper of ambition was kindled in him by the unwise exhortations of his parents, who were continually urging him to get on in the world and excel in the lucrative art of rhetoric (I. 9. 14). Ambition, however, did not counteract his tendency to idleness which involved him in the usual school penalties. He admits that he was led by his love of play and by his passion for the shows of the amphitheatre to neglect his studies. He recalls his early impressions of God as a powerful

Being who could help him to learn his lessons and save him from punishment, and to whom accordingly he prayed fervently (*non parvo affectu*) that he might not be flogged at school (1. 9. 14). The thought of God, in some crude form at least, seems always to have beset him. In infancy he had been made a catechumen with the usual rites (the sign of the cross and administration of salt),[1] and had heard, as he says, "the promise of eternal life through the humility of our Lord God condescending to our pride." A little later in life, being prostrated by sudden and dangerous illness, he asked for baptism and would have received it had he not suddenly recovered, with the result that his "cleansing was postponed."[2]

As regards his education, Augustine frankly confesses that at first he had no love of learning. Greek grammar and literature he simply "hated,"[3] mainly because of the toil involved in learning a foreign language. In particular the study of grammar repelled him, and he reproaches himself for having preferred what was false and vain to what was true and useful: the romance of the *Æneid*, for instance, to a sound knowledge of the rules of composition. (We may note in passing how powerfully the tragic tale of Dido would appeal to the imagination of a Numidian boy.) Criticizing the traditional methods of education Augustine dwells on the bad moral effect of studying pagan mythology, and laments the misdirection of effort which compelled a promising boy to acquire knowledge and aim at successes which were alike vain and profitless—mere "wind and smoke" (*fumus et ventus*). He found by experience that such studies, though they might to some extent form literary taste, entirely failed to discipline character or strengthen the will.[4] At the very time when he was being

[1] Cp. Duchesne, *Christian Worship*, [Eng. Tr.] p. 296.

[2] *Conf.* 1. 11. 17. The African custom was to defer Baptism as long as possible in order not to incur the severe penances which by long tradition were attached to post-baptismal sin. Cp. Brightman in *Early History of the Church and Ministry*, pp. 339, 352.

[3] On Augustine's knowledge of Greek see Gibb and Montgomery, p. 20.

[4] Cp. Tert. *de idol.* x, who regards the "profession of letters" in all

praised for his proficiency by those whom he deemed it "a virtue to please," he was full of grave faults: deceitful, untruthful, unhealthily precocious: equally ready to pilfer from the table or cellar of his parents and to cheat his schoolfellows in games. These tendencies, he observes, are apt to re-appear on a wider stage in later years when men are striving for the greater prizes of life. "Thus the torrent of human custom (*flumen moris humani*) sweeps the sons of men away into a wild and tempestuous sea which even those can hardly traverse who embark on the wood of the Cross" (1. 16. 25).[1]

Throughout his boyhood, however, Augustine appears occasionally to have received religious instruction, and he probably gained some knowledge of the Bible from hearing the lections read in the church services; so that in a certain sense he could claim to have been "a catholic Christian" from his earliest years.[2]

When he was nearly fifteen, he was sent to study at Madaura, a town lying some twenty miles south of Thagaste. Madaura was renowned as the birthplace of the versatile and gifted Apuleius (b. *circ.* 125), a sophist and rhetorician of many-sided knowledge and literary ability who was almost deified by his compatriots, and was revered far and wide as a miracle-worker and magician.[3] M. Bertrand suggests that Augustine's youthful ambition was fired by the local reputation of Apuleius. At Madaura, then, he entered upon the second stage of his education: but he had now reached an age when the life of sense was

its branches as incompatible with Christianity, since the matter of instruction is pagan, and moreover the yearly routine of school-life involves observance of pagan festivals. The same view appears in the earliest *Church Order* in regard to qualifications for Baptism. See Brightman on "Terms of Communion" in *Early History of the Church and Ministry*, p. 327. Greg. Mag. *ep.* xi. 34 reproves a bishop for lecturing on profane literature. For Augustine's later view see *de doctrina* ii. 26. 40; 40. 60 and 61. He came to think that ancient history and literature are the rightful heritage of the Christian thinker and student.

[1] Cp. Wisd. xiv. 5.

[2] *de util. credendi*, 1. 2.

[3] L. Apuleius belongs to the age of Antoninus Pius and M. Aurelius. On his various writings see Teuffel, *Roman Literature*, vol. ii. 257 f.

fully awake in him, and it coincided, as so often happens, with the evanescence even of the slender faith which he already possessed. Unhappily the fact that he was now the victim of overmastering fleshly desires escaped the observation of his father, who was absorbed in the idea that his boy was now launched on the path to success and wealth. "My father," says Augustine, "gave himself no concern how I grew up towards Thee, or how far I was chaste, provided only I became a man of culture—however destitute of Thy culture, O God." Patricius, who had now—probably from very mixed motives—become a catechumen, was proud of his son as a well-grown and promising youth who might look forward to a good marriage and a successful career; but it is evident that Monnica had serious misgivings about him, for she occasionally warned him against the vice to which he was specially tempted. Her admonitions, however, were vain; Augustine despised them, though they came (he says) from God Himself (2. 3. 7). In later days he thought that his mother should have taken steps to get him suitably married; but even she seems to have been as yet blinded by the worldly notion that her son's prospects would suffer if he were prematurely hampered by a wife. Both parents in fact were equally set upon his rising to distinction in learning, but from different motives: Patricius desiring only a lucrative career for his son; Monnica hoping against hope that through the training of his intellectual faculties, he might be led to God.

Meanwhile Augustine himself indulged to the full his own tastes and inclinations without giving much heed to the future; but it seems that after a few months' study at Madaura he returned for some unexplained reason to Thagaste, where he spent the following year in comparative idleness. Evidently his life at Madaura had greatly unsettled him. He lost all hold on religion, and spent most of his time with dissolute companions whose good opinion he strove to win by his extravagances and whose lead he recklessly followed. It is said that among some Roman remains in a North African city the inscription has been discovered: "to hunt, to bathe, to play, to laugh—

this is to live." Augustine apparently acted in the spirit of this motto. He tells us of an impudent and wanton robbery of an orchard in which he took part at this time: "not from any pressure of want, but from mere scorn of justice and the full-fed insolence of sin." He moralizes according to his wont on this senseless exploit, and decides that his motive was mere delight in a lawless deed and in the comradeship of vicious friends (2. 8. 16).

Thus passed his sixteenth year. At seventeen he was sent to complete his education by studying rhetoric at Carthage—*Carthago Veneris* as it was called [1]: one of the five principal cities of the Empire and the maritime capital of the Western Mediterranean. Carthage was a name likely to kindle the enthusiasm of an impressionable African youth. If not in the magnificence of its buildings, at least in the grandeur of its situation, the beauty of its surroundings and the voluptuous charm of its climate, it was superior in attractiveness to Rome itself. There are indications that Patricius could ill afford the expense involved in sending Augustine to Carthage. Probably he lodged with his father's wealthy friend Romanianus, who had a villa at Carthage, but apparently he was left very much to himself, with the result that might have been anticipated in a city which Augustine plainly calls "a seething caldron of debauchery" (*sartago flagitiosorum amorum*). At Carthage indeed the passionate and impressionable youth lived a double life. On the one hand he was obsessed by the thought of love: the desire to love and be beloved. "I was not yet in love, but I loved the idea of love"—*amare amabam* (3. 1. 1). He wasted his leisure hours in a round of amusements and in the sinful indulgence of desire. At the same time he did not altogether neglect his educational opportunities. He was accustomed to watch with keen interest the judicial contests in the law-courts,

[1] The ancient worship of the Phoenician *Tanit* being transformed into the cult of the *Virgo caelestis*. Aug. *enarr. in ps.* 98. 14 calls Carthage "Regnum caelestis." Cp. *Epist.* 118. 10: "Duae tantae urbes, latinarum linguaram artifices, Roma atque Carthago." See Boissier, *La fin du Paganisme*, vol. ii., pp. 346 f.

and by diligence and assiduity in his own work he actually attained the position of "senior" (*maior*) in the school of rhetoric—a comprehensive term, of course, which in the fifth century embraced all kinds of liberal studies, including science and philosophy. Nor must we forget the impression which great Carthage would make on a fresh and intelligent mind. Carthage introduced Augustine into a world visibly dominated and organized by the genius of Rome. It stirred him to "think imperially"; it taught him lessons by which in later years, as judge, bishop and administrator, he was destined to profit. The blessings of civil order, the beneficent fruits of the *pax Romana*, the humanizing power of a strong and impartial government—these would naturally mould his thought and fire his imagination. At Carthage, too, he doubtless witnessed occasional collisions between pagans and Christians, not to speak of the unseemly contentions of different Christian sects. He moved amid a Babel of races, customs and beliefs which the strong hand of authority kept in control. It seems strange that of all these new experiences he has nothing to say in the *Confessions*. But we must remember that he is absorbed in his soul's history; he is interested only in the different phases of his moral and spiritual development. Accordingly he merely tells us that his successes at Carthage made him vain and conceited,[1] and that he was led far astray by a passionate love of pleasure. It was here in his seventeenth year that he formed an irregular union with a girl [who afterwards became the mother of his son Adeodatus. Such *liaisons* were of course customary in those days and were condoned by public opinion; and it is creditable] to Augustine that he continued faithful to his mistress and never lost his affection for her.[2] Moreover his instincts were at least of a quiet and orderly kind. He was disgusted, for instance, by the wild follies of a set of undis-

[1] On one occasion he won the prize in a poetical competition and was crowned by the proconsul (4. 3. 5).

[2] At that time "even the Church recognized monogamous concubinage, and this woman may have been a freed-woman or some one who could not be legally married to him." Glover, p. 199.

ciplined students who styled themselves "wreckers" (*eversores*) like the Mohawks of seventeenth-century London, who amused themselves by annoying freshmen, insulting strangers and generally making themselves a nuisance. Augustine had acquaintances among this crew, but he was not one of them, nor had he any wish to emulate their senseless behaviour. He possessed qualities which lifted him far above their level: a feeling for the grace and order of life: a delight in music, in the drama, in the beauty of nature, in the discussion of intellectual problems; and his personal friends were of quite a different type: young men like his fellow-townsman Alypius, Nebridius, Honoratus, and the unnamed friend whose early death was such an overwhelming blow to him. With only a passing allusion to the "wreckers," he proceeds to mention an incident of his nineteenth year which proved to be a turning point in his spiritual history.

This incident was the reading of Cicero's *Hortensius* or *de philosophia*—a lost treatise of which a good many fragments are preserved—some by Augustine himself, some by Lactantius, Nonius and others. This work awakened in him fresh ideas and interests. Hitherto he had been absorbed in the study of rhetoric. Now for the first time there dawned upon him a different ideal which changed his outlook and turned the current of his life Godward.[1] One thing alone damped his ardour to some extent, namely the absence of Christ's name—that blessed name which, he says, his childish heart had sucked in with his mother's milk. However cultivated and polished Cicero's style might be—however true and edifying the substance of his book—"whatever was without that name took not entire hold of me" (3. 4. 8). Nevertheless Augustine found the *Hortensius* full of wholesome instruction. Let me quote two or three passages as samples of the work—

[1] 3. 4. 7. foll. "Ille liber mutavit affectum meum et ad te ipsum, Domine, mutavit preces meas et vota ac desideria mea fecit alia. Viluit mihi repente omnis vana spes . . . et surgere coeperam ut ad te redirem," etc. On the book *Hortensius* see Cicero's own remark in *de divinatione* 2. 1. 1.

passages preserved by Augustine himself in various parts of the *de Trinitate:*

"To will," writes Cicero, "what is unseemly is in itself the height of wretchedness; nor is it such misery to fail in obtaining what you want, as to wish to obtain what you ought not." Again, "In the next world what need will there be of eloquence? *There* no legal processes are carried on. There our blessedness will consist in the study of virtue and the advance of knowledge. Other objects of endeavour are matters of necessity; this only is a matter of delight." Once more, a passage which Augustine particularly admired was the following: "If, as was thought by ancient philosophers, and those much the greatest and most famous, we have souls that are eternal and akin to the divine, we must suppose that the more these devote themselves to their proper course,—that is, to the cultivation of reason and the desire of investigation, and the less they mix and involve themselves in the errors and vices of mankind, so much the more easy do they find the ascent (of the soul) and its return to heaven."[1]

The chief consequence of his study of the *Hortensius* was that Augustine turned to the Scriptures, hoping in them to discover the path of wisdom which he was now eager to pursue. Cicero's treatise found an echo in his intelligence, but it left his religious instinct unsatisfied. It could not impart the secret of self-mastery. He hoped to find in the Bible that of which he was in search. But its "unadorned and rugged style" (he read it in the Old Latin version)—so different from the *Tulliana dignitas*—repelled his fastidious taste; nor was his spiritual eye opened as yet to discover the "hid treasure" of God's word. He turned from the Bible to the pretentious system of Manichaeism—attracted by its parade of divine knowledge, and by its use of Christian watchwords, "God," "Christ," "Paraclete": its insistence on prayer as the chief religious duty: its promise of enlightenment.

[1] *de Trin.* 13. 5; 4. 2.; 14. 26. In *c. Acad.* 2 (dedication to Romanianus) he praises philosophy in Ciceronic style.

Later on we must consider more closely those elements in Manichaeism which were likely to attract men of Augustine's temperament. He was captivated in the first instance by the Manichaean offer of "the Truth, the Truth."[1] He tells us that he found in this system an answer to the question, Whence is evil?—an answer which appeased the sense of sin by representing it as a necessary outcome of the material element in man's constitution. He was as yet precluded by a two-fold prejudice from effective criticism of the Manichaean view concerning the Old Testament and the nature of God. As he did not in the least understand the real nature of evil, so he had no notion of the progressiveness of revelation—the principle, I mean, of divine self-accommodation to man's actual condition and capacity at different stages of his spiritual development. Finally, he says plainly "I knew not that God was spirit"; he could not conceive of any substance that was not corporeal. "My eye could see nothing but bodies; my mind could apprehend nothing but materialized ideas" (3. 7. 12). He was seeking God, he says, by the carnal senses, and not by that intelligence which separates man from the brute.

At Carthage then Augustine first yielded to the fascination of this strange and pretentious system. He was not alone in coming under its spell. "At that time," says Prof. Harnack, "any one who had studied the Scriptures but had no confidence in ecclesiastical exegesis, especially in regard to the stumbling-blocks presented by the Old Testament; any one who knew not the perils of free speculation yet who enquired into the nature of the world, and attempted out of the physical elements to frame a conception of the spiritual world and the problem of evil, naturally became a Manichaean."[2] Thus Augustine became an ardent "hearer" of the sect and doubtless did his

[1] *c. Epist. Fundamenti*, 5: "Apud vos . . . sola persona veritatis pollicitatio." Cp. *Conf.* 3. 6. 10. Mani styled himself "apostle of Jesus Christ by the providence of God the Father": *c. Epist. Fund*, 6.

[2] Harnack, *A.K.*, p. 20. Obs. The *auditores* "supplied the elect with needful nourishment. In return they received from the elect benedictions, and obtained an interest in their intercessions" (G. and M. xxvii.).

utmost to proselytize his friends Alypius, Romanianus and others. But his career at Carthage presently came to an abrupt end. He returned to his native town and established himself there as a teacher of rhetoric.

This surprising step, which involved a temporary separation from his mistress, is probably to be connected with his father's death, which apparently took place soon after he went to Carthage. His mother seems to have been left a widow in rather poor circumstances, and he may have thought it his duty to set about earning a livelihood at once, in a place where competition would be less keen than in Carthage itself. At Thagaste then we find him : an aggressive advocate of Manichaean error and even at times yielding to the allurements of astrology—a vulgar superstition to which in spite of friendly expostulations he clung for some time, perhaps because it supplied his troubled conscience with a useful opiate, by assuring him that sin was a matter of necessity : *De caelo tibi est inevitabilis causa peccandi* (4. 3. 4).[1] Man might lay the blame of his moral failures on the Creator of the sky and stars. We can scarcely wonder that Monnica was impelled by her zeal for the Church to take the strong measure of closing her doors to Augustine, who perhaps found a temporary home in the luxurious villa of his patron Romanianus. He relates that his mother's fervent prayers for his conversion were answered by a singular dream which so far consoled her that she presently relented and re-admitted him to her house and table.[2] He also tells us that she besought a certain bishop to see her son with a view to reclaiming him from his errors. The bishop declined—prudently as Augustine thinks—to interfere, and at last, vexed by Monnica's importunity, made the memorable reply : " Go your way . . It is impossible that the son of these tears—*filius istarum lacrymarum*—should be lost " (3. 12. 21).

[1] In 7. 6. 8 Augustine relates a circumstance which finally dispelled his belief in astrology.

[2] Dr. Mason in *Early History of the Church and Ministry*, p. 52 note, points out that *regula* in *Conf.* 3. 11. 19 means the traditional " rule of faith " ; this seems to be plain from 8. 12. 30.

She afterwards told Augustine that this utterance had seemed to her a veritable message from heaven.

Apparently Augustine's stay at Thagaste was brief. His removal thence was hastened by an event about which he has much to say: the death of a friend—a former schoolfellow—"whose dear familiar name," as Cardinal Newman says, "he apparently has not courage to mention," but to whom he was passionately attached. He himself had led the youth into error and misbelief. This friend fell ill, was baptized when unconscious, and on his recovery became a convinced and serious Christian. Augustine tells us how he tried to laugh him out of his newly found faith:

"I ventured to jest, thinking that he would jest too, about the baptism which he had received, when insensible. But he shrank from me with horror as from an enemy, and with a new-found courage, warned me never to speak so to him again, if I wished to remain his friend. I was so astounded and confused that I desisted, resolving to wait till he should regain his strength, when I would tell him frankly what I thought. But he was torn away from my madness that he might be preserved in Thy kingdom for my consolation. A few days afterwards, during my absence, the fever returned and he died. The sorrow fell on my heart like darkness, and wherever I looked I saw nought but death. My country became a torture: my father's house a misery . . . tears were my only comfort and took my friend's place in my heart's desire" (4. 4. 8 and 9). Unable to bear the insupportable load of a comfortless sorrow, he fled from Thagaste and returned once more to Carthage, where he spent the next seven years (376–383) engaged in professional work: "In those years I became a teacher of rhetoric, and because I could not conquer my greed, I sold the art of conquering in the strife of tongues" (4. 2. 2). It is curious to note the contemptuous tone he invariably uses in speaking of his duties as a teacher. He says that he instructed in guile those who were mere lovers of vanity; mere seekers after falsehood. He speaks of the rhetoric school as "a market of verbosity"; of

the professor's official seat as *cathedra mendacii*.[1] It seems as if he was never entirely whole-hearted in his zeal for his profession and he gradually came to regard it with sheer disgust, as concerned merely with "lying frenzy and forensic strife."

At Carthage Augustine rejoined his unmarried wife, who shortly afterwards gave birth to Adeodatus. New interests and friendships presently healed his grief for his lost friend. In some tender and beautiful chapters he moralizes upon this change of feeling (4. 8 foll.) and we find in them an echo of the immortal sentence contained in the proem of the *Confessions*: *Requiescite in eo et quieti eritis.* "Rest in Him and you shall be at rest . . . The good which you love is from Him" (4. 12. 18)

Augustine had indeed a genius for friendship, and there is something very charming in his description of the little circle of friends which gathered round him at Carthage: he speaks of their keen intellectual interest, their animated discussions, their gaiety and laughter, their mutual courtesy and affection, "the spice of disagreement which seasoned the monotony of consent." Yet the description is not without its note of self-reproach: "My greatest refreshment I found in the solace of new friends who loved with me what I loved instead of Thee."

At this time he engaged in literary work—and wrote two or three books on Beauty and Fitness (*de Apto et Pulcro*[2]), the fruit of his reflexions on the relation of love to beauty. This work he dedicated to Hierius, a Syrian by nationality, who had become famous as a professor of rhetoric at Rome. "I thought it a great point gained," is his naïve remark, "if I could bring my style and learning to that famous man's notice"; but in later life this ebullition of youthful vanity filled him with self-reproach. As a matter of fact nothing is now known of the juvenile essay which he regarded with such complacency: but the subject he chose is perhaps a slight indication that his mind was already turning in the direction of Platonism.

Apart from his professional work, however, the chief occupa-

[1] 9. 2. 2 and 4; 9. 5. 13. Cp. 8. 6. 13: "Vendebam dicendi facultatem, si qua dicendo praestari potest."

[2] In 4. 15. 27. he says he was "26 or 27" when he wrote these (i.e. in about 380).

tion of Augustine during his sojourn at Carthage was a further investigation of the Manichaean system. He was still obsessed by two erroneous notions: first, that evil had some kind of substantial existence; secondly, that God is in some sense corporeal. "I thought of Thee, O Lord, as an infinite luminous body (*corpus lucidum et immensum*), and of myself as a piece broken off that body" (4. 16. 31). He imagined, moreover, that human intelligence was the supreme and immutable good —"thus absurdly maintaining (he says) that I was by nature what Thou art." But he found that the "elect" among the Manichaeans were more dexterous and plausible in raising objections to catholic belief than in defending their own. In particular, the astrological pretensions of the sect proved in fact to be fraudulent: while the study of Aristotle disenchanted Augustine of Manichaean physics, which were little better than high-sounding mythology (*phantasmata splendida*). Aristotle led him back to sober thought. More eager for reality than for words, he tells us that he found the teachings of "philosophers" (i.e. accredited teachers of science or natural philosophy) to be "more probable" than the unproved assertions of the Manichaeans. With their successful prediction of eclipses and their exact calculation of planetary movements he contrasted the "voluminous folly" of the Manichaean writings. In these, he says, "I was ordered to believe, but the ideas did not correspond with—rather they contradicted—the rational theories established by mathematics and confirmed by the evidence of my own eyes"[1] What made errors of this kind more intolerable to Augustine was the impudent claim of Mani to be the divine Paraclete,[2] and his disillusionment reached its climax when he was brought into contact with the famous Manichaean bishop Faustus.

Faustus appears to have been a man of high character, who honestly believed himself to be a consistent disciple of our

[1] *Conf.* 5. 3. 6. Cp. *c. Epist. Fund.* 19: "Quid infelicius ista superstitione inveniri potest quae non modo non exhibet scientiam quam promittit atque veritatem, sed ea dicit quae vehementer sunt scientiae veritatique contraria?". Cp. *c. Faust.* 2. 5.

[2] *Conf.* 5. 5. 8. Cp. *de util. cred.* 3. 7.; Euseb. *H.E.* 7. 31.

Lord. "You behold in me," he is reported to have said, "the very life of the beatitudes of Christ which comprise the Gospel; and yet you ask whether I receive the Gospel!"[1] Augustine's friends constantly re-assured him, when he expressed any doubts about the truth of the Manichaean system, by referring to Faustus. "Faustus will solve your difficulty; Faustus will come and explain everything." When however the great man actually appeared, what had this "graceful cup-bearer" to offer that could allay the thirst for truth (5. 6. 10)? He proved to be as vague and ignorant as less celebrated teachers of the sect. He evidently possessed some charm of manner and a certain gift of fluency, but these endowments were unable to conceal either his deficiency in liberal culture or the entire superficiality of his thought. He was indeed honest enough to admit that he had not the requisite knowledge for answering Augustine's questions. For a while, therefore, Augustine, despairing of truth, dropped his special enquiries and devoted himself to studying literature with Faustus. "All my desire to make further progress in Manichaeism fell dead as soon as I became acquainted with Faustus. Thus he who had been to so many a deadly snare began, without willing or knowing it, to loose the snare in which I was caught" (5. 7. 12, 13).

Augustine gives us no details of his sojourn at Carthage: but we gather that it was a period of restless and fruitless enquiry: darkened by despondency and the sense of alienation from God.[2] Further he was not particularly successful as a teacher of rhetoric. At times his work filled him with self-contempt. He speaks of himself as a mere "vendor of words"; and though he had pupils recommended to him for the most part by personal friends, he lacked some necessary qualifications for his task. On the other hand he was obliged to read widely for his lectures, and it was at Carthage that he laid the founda-

[1] *c. Faust.* 5. 1. Faustus regarded Catholic Christians as "semi-Christians" (c. *Faust.* 1. 3).

[2] *Conf.* 5. 2. 2.: "Et tu eras ante me, ego autem et a me discesseram; nec me inveniebam, quanto minus te."

tions of that "truly encyclopaedic culture" which gives the *de civitate* its place in the literature of the world.

But his main preoccupation was the search for truth; truth which he had vainly hoped to find in Manichaeism. It seems strange, indeed, that while he was himself suspicious and dissatisfied, he should have succeeded in converting to the system of error several of his pupils. It shows how persuasive was his eloquence, how attractive his personality. But Manichaeism offered no solution of his own personal problems, brought no relief or rest to his troubled mind.

And at this point opens a new chapter in his history.

Augustine was now in his thirtieth year (383–4) when he was urged by friends once more to change his sphere of work. He was naturally attracted to Rome partly by the larger opportunities open to him as a teacher in the imperial city, partly by the general report that the students there were more serious and disciplined in their habits than the turbulent and disorderly youths of Carthage (5. 8. 14). Aware that he would never obtain his mother's consent to his departure, he only escaped from Carthage by a heartless act of deceit, leaving her to pray and weep in a chapel close to the harbour, while he hastily embarked, on pretence of bidding farewell to a friend who was about to make the voyage. "And what was she beseeching of Thee, O my God, with all those tears, but that thou wouldest hinder me from sailing? Nevertheless thou in Thy hidden wisdom, didst grant the substance of her desire, while refusing the thing she asked for, in order that Thou mightest effect in me that which was ever the object of her prayer."[1]

No incident of Augustine's voyage is recorded. With his arrival in Italy begins a new chapter of his history, and when five years later he again trod the soil of Africa his "soul's tragedy" had been brought to its *dénoûment*.

> The sequences of that mysterious Love
> Which still, through devious windings, tracks its own,
> By deep experience he had learned to prove
> And know, as few have known.[2]

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[1] *Conf.* 5. 8. 15.

[2] W. Bright, *Hymns and other Verses*: "The death of St. Augustine," p. 178.

II

THE CAREER OF AUGUSTINE: FROM HIS ARRIVAL IN ITALY TO HIS DEATH

AUGUSTINE reached Rome probably in August or September, 383. This would account for the fact that he immediately fell ill of a violent fever which very nearly proved fatal. He was the guest of a Manichaean, a "hearer" like himself, to whom he had been commended by friends at Carthage. He recovered from this illness, thanks (he says) to his mother's prayers; but he has nothing to tell of his brief sojourn in Rome. M. Bertrand remarks that in the whole mass of his writings, there is not discoverable a word of eulogium for the grandeur of the eternal city. It may be that as a patriotic African and almost a native of Carthage, he was influenced by the ancient spirit of rivalry between the two famous cities.[1] Moreover his residence at Rome was no pleasant experience. The season was unhealthy for a man of delicate constitution; the search for pupils was a humiliating and uncongenial task; and he was greatly discouraged, as at Carthage, by the behaviour of the students, who, though decorous enough in manners, were accustomed to defraud their teacher of his fees by removing themselves, just before payment was due, to another school (5. 12. 22). Probably the state of things was not very different from that described in Juvenal's 7th satire:

> Quis color et quod sit causae genus, atque ubi summa
> Quaestio, quae veniant diversa parte sagittae,
> Nosse velint omnes, mercedem solvere nemo.

[1] *St. Augustin*, p. 175.

"Mercedem appellas? quid enim scio?" Culpa docentis
Scilicet arguitur, quod laeva in parte mamillae
Nil salit Arcadico juveni.[1]

The same poet's third satire, with its vivacious description of the *mille pericula saevae urbis*, may give us a further clue to Augustine's dislike of Rome. He must often have felt homesick and dejected when he contrasted the hard magnificence of the imperial city—the coarse luxury of the wealthy, the degraded tastes and idle habits of the populace, the manifold discomforts, perils and annoyances of life in such surroundings—with the sunlit suburbs, the tranquil gardens, the luxuriant vineyards of Carthage; the enchantment of the view from its heights, bounded on one side by distant mountains, on the other by the deep blue waters of the Mediterranean.

In his search for pupils Augustine was aided by his friend Alypius, who had already preceded him to Rome with the object of studying law and had obtained an important post as assessor in the Italian Bounty Office (6. 10. 16).[2] Moreover Alypius, though he had been induced by Augustine to join the Manichaeans, was a man of rare integrity and good sense, and his influence at this time was a real safeguard to his friend. On the other hand, Augustine tells us that he himself was the means of reclaiming Alypius, at least for a time, from an inordinate and perilous passion for the gladiatorial contests.[3]

Apart from the claims of his profession, Augustine's sojourn in Rome gave him the opportunity of a closer insight into the absurdities of Manichaeism, and into the moral inconsistencies of its votaries. For personal reasons, however, he continued to be a "hearer," and was on friendly terms with some

[1] *Sat.* 7. 155 foll. Gifford translates:

"Where the main jet of every question lies,
And whence the chief objections may arise,
All wish to know; but none the price will pay.
'The price,' retorts the scholar, 'do you say?
What have I learned?' There go the master's pains
Because, forsooth! the Arcadian youth lacks brains."

[2] See Gibb and Montgomery, note on *Conf.* 6. 10. 16.

[3] *Conf.* 6. 7. 12. On Alypius' temporary relapse see 6. 8. 13.

prominent members of the sect, although his allegiance had nearly reached the breaking point. Indeed, under the influence of the "Academic" philosophy which he studied about this time, he was beginning to despair of attaining to any certain knowledge of truth ; [1] but he found it convenient to excuse his own moral weakness by professing the Manichaean tenet of man's irresponsibility for sin.

An opening elsewhere, however, shortly presented itself. Symmachus, the *praefectus urbis*, was requested by the municipality of Milan to nominate a suitable person for the professorial chair of rhetoric, recently established in that city.[2] Augustine offered himself as a candidate, and thanks to the interest of his Manichaean friends obtained the post, to which the fact that Milan was the seat of the imperial court lent exceptional dignity and importance. But in commending him to the praefect, as Augustine observes, the Manichaeans unconsciously took a step which led to his final detachment from their community ; for the duties of his office necessarily brought him into contact with the great bishop Ambrose who for some ten years already had governed the Church of Milan.[3]

Augustine's removal to Milan in the autumn of 384 was the beginning of the final stage in his progress towards conversion. He was now thirty years old ; the follies and sins of his youth lay behind him ; the difficulties and disappointments of professional life had in some degree chastened and matured his character. He found himself holding the position of a dignified official in a famous city which might even be regarded as the second capital of the Western Empire. An opportunity seemed to offer itself for reviewing his past career and making resolutions for the future.

[1] *de util. cred.* 8. 20 : "Saepe mihi videbatur non posse inveniri [verum] magnique fluctus cogitationum mearum in Academicorum suffragium ferebantur." Cp. *Conf.* 5. 10. 19.

[2] Of Q. Aurelius Symmachus see Mr. T. R. Glover's account in *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, chap. vii. Mr. Glover remarks incidentally : "Strange as it may seem, the most important act of his life in its bearing on history was his recommendation of St. Augustine as a professor of rhetoric to the people of Milan" (p. 150).

[3] Ambrose, bp. 374–397.

In the fifth book of the *Confessions* (ch. 10), Augustine gives an account of his belief at this time. The convictions to which he had been led may be described very much in his own words.

"As yet (he says) I held that it is not *we* who sin, but that some alien nature sins in us; my pride delighted in the notion that I was not to blame. I loved to excuse myself and to lay the guilt on something else which was with me and yet was not myself.

"It seemed to me utterly unworthy to believe that God could wear a form of human flesh or be subject to bodily limitations. Yet, when I wished to think of God, I could conceive of nothing but a corporeal substance; for I did not believe in the existence of anything else. This was the principal and almost the sole cause that made my errors inevitable.

"Consistently with this I held that there was a corporeal substance of evil also, having its own hideous and misshapen bulk. There were therefore, I imagined, two antagonistic material substances, both infinite, yet so that the evil was smaller and the good greater.

"I judged it more religious than not to suppose that God was infinite on all sides save in that direction where evil impinged upon the good. On this side, I was compelled to think of Deity as limited.

"Finally, I imagined the Saviour, the only begotten of God, to have been projected (*porrectum*) as it were for man's salvation from the bright mass of the divine substance. His nature being such, it could not, I thought, have been born of the Virgin, which would imply contact with matter. Hence I shrank from believing that He was born in the flesh, lest I should be compelled to acknowledge that He was defiled by the flesh."

Augustine adds that he could see no answer to the objections urged by Manichaeans against the Scriptures. Though their arguments appeared to be weak, Augustine did not as yet see how they could be met. But chiefly, he says, he was stifled and crushed by his own materialistic mode of thought, which

hindered him from breathing the pure air of divine truth (5. 11. 21).

Such was his frame of mind when he quitted Rome; and he seems to have lost no time in presenting himself to Ambrose, who received him, he says, in a fatherly manner and welcomed the stranger *satis episcopaliter*: like a true bishop (5. 13. 23). It is probable that Ambrose—himself a man of illustrious family, equally experienced in the tasks of civil government and in the spiritual oversight of a great Church, gave the young Augustine a welcome which though kind was somewhat dignified and constrained. Probably he felt unable entirely to trust a mere stranger, an African by race, and a heretic in religion, appointed to a municipal professorship by the pagan Symmachus, with whom Ambrose was not on good terms.[1] Augustine's language suggests that the bishop's reception of him was not altogether so flattering to his self-esteem as he had anticipated.

Augustine on his side was considerably impressed by Ambrose. He gives a vivid sketch of the great prelate: his habits of life, his methods of study, his eloquence as a preacher, his extensive influence. The fact is that Ambrose, with the graces of a Christian, combined some of the traditional excellences of the Roman character. "His birth, relationships, habits, bound him to the ancient society: he held to the new by his beliefs and his dignity, and so could form a link of union between them."[2] To his preaching Augustine listened at first in a critical mood; he was much more interested in the rhetorical style of Ambrose than in the subject of his discourses. "I cared not to understand *what* he said, but only to hear *how* he said it (5. 14. 24)." What chiefly appealed to him was the skill with which the preacher expounded the spiritual sense of the Old Testament, enlarging on the text, *The letter killeth but the spirit giveth life.* Augustine heard one difficulty after another explained by means of the

[1] See an account of the relations of Ambrose and Symmachus in Glover, pp. 153 foll.

[2] Boissier, *op. cit.* p. 360.

allegorical method, and was thus led to think that after all there was something to be said for the catholic belief in answer to its Manichaean assailants. If not yet victorious over its rival, Catholicism was at least not vanquished; and Augustine began to perceive that, if once he could be convinced of the existence of a spiritual (non-corporeal) substance, he might be brought to the point of abjuring his heresy. True, he was still wavering and perplexed; but at least he felt that he could no longer adhere *ex animo* to a discredited sect, and accordingly he resolved to become a catechumen in the Church—the Church of his parents—in the hope that clearer light and guidance would come in due course.[1] He had never, indeed, quite lost the feeling that in some sense he belonged to the Church, and that in his early faith he might re-discover the truth of which he was in search.

Accordingly, his mother, who now joined him at Milan, found him "not indeed as yet possessed of the truth but at least rescued from error." What wonder that she exulted in this answer to her constant prayers, and reverenced Ambrose as an angel of God? (6. 1. 1).

Augustine's condition of mind as described in the sixth book, was one of suspense. He had begun to understand the strength of the case for catholic Christianity. Nor was it without effect on his mind that at Milan he found the Church surrounded by all the prestige which court-favour could bestow, and embodied, as it were, in the majestic personality of Ambrose. The faith which Augustine had hitherto despised seemed here to be in a real sense dominant and impressive, appealing alike to reason, to imagination and to the instinct of obedience. At the same time he was still haunted by a scepticism which hindered his free acceptance of the truth. He plainly expresses his disappointment that Ambrose either would not or could not help him in his perplexities. Eager as he was to discuss

[1] *de util. cred.* 8. 20: "Decreveram tamdiu esse catechumenus in ecclesia . . . donec aut invenirem quod vellem, aut mihi persuaderem non esse quaerendum: opportunissimum ergo me ac valde docilem tunc invenire posset, si fuisset qui posset docere."

with the bishop the problems of faith or philosophy which harassed his mind, he found but little opportunity of converse with him. Ambrose was immersed in business: he was a man of little leisure, and the few intervals which he could snatch from official duties and interviews were devoted to meals or to study. It seems that visitors were occasionally admitted to the apartment in which he was thus engaged, on condition that they did not interrupt him; and Augustine notes that having on many occasions watched the bishop intent on his books, he withdrew without the chance of exchanging a word with him. "I found no opportunity," he says, "except in brief interviews, of consulting the holy oracle of his breast." It is likely that Ambrose on his side had little sympathy with Augustine's difficulties. As M. Bertrand says, "This fervid African temperament, these barren fits of melancholy, this intellectual vagueness, this perpetual hesitancy in matters of faith—all this could not but displease a man of the positive Roman temper like Ambrose—a former provincial governor accustomed to command." [1]

The effect, however, of Ambrose's *preaching* was considerable. It convinced Augustine that the sophistries of Manichaeism were not unanswerable, and that what he had for years so vehemently attacked was a mere caricature or distortion of Christian belief; that the Church neither proclaimed a God imprisoned in space (6. 3. 4) nor prohibited free investigation of truth. He learned, moreover, the principle that in the ordinary affairs of life men necessarily act upon faith without demonstration. Hence he was led to recognize in Scripture the authority of an inspired guide of faith and conduct. "Thou didst convince me," he writes, "that the blame rested—not on those who believed Thy books which Thou hast established so high in authority among almost all nations, but on those who disbelieved them." And if he were asked "How do you know that these books were given to mankind by the

[1] *Op. cit.* p. 210. Cp. Boissier, *op. cit.* p. 361. "Perhaps Ambrose, a man of decision and action, could not understand the eternal hesitations of Augustine."

Spirit of the one and most truthful God?" he would reply that "this was the very thing he found most easy to believe, since not even all contentious cavilling of mutually destructive philosophers could force him to doubt for an instant the existence of God, or the fact of His providential governance of human affairs" (6. 5. 7).

Meanwhile Augustine was occupied with the duties of his professorial chair, and his future now seeming to be tolerably assured, he set his heart on the pursuit of worldly comfort and success. Presently he would marry and live at ease, surrounded by congenial friends and gratifying his taste for philosophical inquiry and speculation. But he found life full of vexation. "How miserable I was!" he cries. "God was proving His favour towards me by marring the sweetness of all that was not Himself." He moralizes on his accidental glimpse of a beggar, who by means of a trifle tossed to him by passers-by, had already attained to a cheerful enjoyment of life which was denied to Augustine himself. "He was merry: I was anxious; he was free from care: I full of fears." Even the enviable moment when he was summoned to deliver a formal panegyric in the Emperor's presence did not elate him. For him the days were empty of true satisfaction. As he says, *Quaerebam typhum:* "I was hunting after vanity." But at least he was not alone in his distress. He had hired a house and garden at Milan, where he was joined by his mistress, who brought her son, by his devoted mother, and in course of time by other relatives and friends: his brother Navigius, his cousins Rusticus and Lastidianus; Alypius "the brother of his heart," his gentle and thoughtful compatriot and friend Nebridius.[1] Romanianus too, who happened to be at Milan on business, was within call. Monnica seems to have kept house for him, and we may suppose that in this strangely assorted household difficulties sometimes arose; but touching these Augustine is silent. He and his friends Alypius and

[1] *Conf.* 4. 3. 6: "Carissimus meus Nebridius, adolescens valde bonus et valde cautus." Cp. 6. 10. 17; 8. 6. 13. In 9. 3. 6 Augustine mentions N.'s conversion and death.

Nebridius formed an inner circle—absorbed in their own spiritual troubles and perplexities. "We were three famishing mouths," he says, "complaining of our distress to one another and waiting upon Thee that Thou mightest give us our meat in due season." The three discussed their difficulties together, asking continually *Quamdiu haec?* "How long shall it be thus?" As yet, however, they did not see their way to take any decided step towards forsaking the world, since they could discern no certain truth which they might grasp in its stead.

Altogether it is a depressing picture that Augustine draws of himself at this period. At thirty he found himself very much where he was in his nineteenth year: still sticking fast in the mire of evil habits: still eager to achieve successes and to enjoy comforts which ever eluded his grasp: still saying to himself, "To-morrow I shall make the great discovery; the truth will appear and I shall apprehend it; or Faustus will come and explain everything. O ye sages of the Academy, is there then no certainty that man can grasp for the guidance of life?" (6. 11. 18). The chapter in which this passage occurs gives us a graphic picture of the *malaise* and indecision by which Augustine was tormented. At one moment the "towering authority" (*eminens culmen auctoritatis*) of the catholic faith makes its impression. "Never," he insists, "would God have done so great things for us if the soul's life perished with that of the body. Why not then cast aside earthly hopes and devote oneself wholly to the search after God and the blessed life?" Then the claim of this present world obtrudes itself: "Yet wait a little while. This life also is pleasant and has no small sweetness of its own. It is no light matter to sever oneself from it." So he wavered pitiably from hour to hour, and meanwhile time was on the wing: *Transibant tempora et tardabam converti ad Dominum* (6. 11. 20) *et differebam de die in diem vivere in te.*

At length it was agreed by his mother and his friends that he had better marry, and they accordingly busied themselves in arranging what they deemed a suitable match. But while

the marriage was still pending Augustine was fired by a new project. He proposed to some eight or ten of his friends, including the wealthy Romanianus, that they should withdraw from the cares of worldly business and live in community, providing for their wants from a common purse. The motive of this scheme was not a lofty one. What Augustine yearned for was a sheltered life in the congenial company of his intimate friends—a life protected from the rude intrusion of worldly claims and directed by one only rule—a rule comfortably indefinite—the pursuit of truth and of the *vita beata*. This naïve project, however, was speedily wrecked. "As soon as we began to ask whether the wives whom some already had, or hoped to have, would tolerate this arrangement, our excellent plan exploded in our hands and was cast aside like a broken toy. Strong in thy counsel, Thou didst laugh at ours and pave the way for Thine own (6. 14. 24)." Meanwhile his mistress, the mother of Adeodatus, had been dismissed—torn from his side, he declares—as an obstacle to his projected marriage. Augustine nowhere reproaches himself for his very questionable treatment of this poor woman, who was by faith a Christian, devoted to her lover and evidently not destitute of noble instincts. It seems that she returned to Africa pledging herself to remain single. No sooner, however, had she departed than Augustine, unable to endure the strain of two years' delay before his marriage could take place, formed another irregular connexion. Indeed, he hints that he might have fallen to an even lower depth, but for the lingering dread of death and judgment to come (6. 16. 26).

The seventh book of the *Confessions* marks another pause in Augustine's spiritual history. It is a book of reflexion, describing the conception of the divine nature and the view of the problem of evil which he held at this stage of his career. He had arrived at a belief in Christ—genuine so far as it went; he also accepted the authority of Scripture and believed in the life after death. But this vague and defective creed could not allay the anguish of uncertainty which tormented him in his effort to solve the problem of evil. The chief point of interest

in book VII, however, is the account of his introduction to what he calls "the books of the Platonists," which in their turn led him to a serious study of the New Testament and especially of St. Paul's Epistles. In a later chapter we may consider more carefully the significance of this epoch-making incident or accident—for it seems that he was advised to study in a Latin version certain *libri Platonici* by a vain and pretentious acquaintance whose name he does not mention. Let it suffice here to say that the books evidently included some portion of the *Enneads* of Plotinus, that great thinker of whom Augustine himself elsewhere says that in him "Plato might be thought to have lived again." [1] In fact the Platonists, proclaiming the spirituality of God and the mystery of a mediating Logos, appeared to Augustine to be pioneers who at least beheld the promised land, although, like Moses, they were unable to enter in and dwell there. "They see," he says, "the goal of the pilgrimage, but not the road which leads thither." Thus in order to discover the true way leading to the blessed country, that home of the soul whither Platonism could not guide him, he turned again to the Scriptures and eagerly searched St. Paul's writings which exalted so highly the power of divine grace: grace cleansing the conscience and liberating the will: grace manifested in the love and the passion of Jesus: grace healing the broken heart and putting in the converted sinner's mouth *a new song—even a thanksgiving unto our God* (*7.* 21. 27). St. Paul taught Augustine that God was to be attained, not through vain efforts of reason but through surrender of will and purification of heart.

These onward steps, however, towards conversion were not the work of a day. In his perplexity, Augustine bethought him of consulting some experienced spiritual guide, and accordingly sought out Simplicianus (destined to succeed Ambrose as bishop of Milan), an elderly priest of devout life, held in honour by Ambrose himself as his "spiritual father," a man of wide experience and liberal mind. This good man received Augustine kindly and congratulated him on having been led to study

[1] *c. Acad.* 3. 18. 41.

the Platonistic writings in which God and His Logos were everywhere implied (*insinuari* 8. 2. 3). Further, by way of encouraging him, Simplicianus told him of the experience of Victorinus—whose version of the Platonistic books Augustine had used and whose memorable conversion late in life had been the talk of Rome some twenty-five years previously (*c.* 360). Augustine was profoundly moved by this account and ardently yearned to emulate the courage of Victorinus ;[1] but the strong chain of evil habit still held him back from any decisive step, though his reason was virtually convinced. Still, like a man unable to shake off his slumber, he murmured in reply to the divine call, " Presently—oh presently ! Let me alone for yet a little while." But, he adds, " this presently, presently " dragged on indefinitely, and the " little while " proved to be " all the while " (" *Modo et modo " non habebant modum*). He was already by intellectual conviction a Catholic ; he had found, he believed, the *pearl of great price* (8. 1. 2) ; but it required some overmastering personal impulse to bring to a point the influence of Victorinus' example. For the moment he gave himself up to his usual duties, finding time, indeed, to attend frequently the services of the Church, but unwilling to commit himself more definitely. Nevertheless the supreme crisis was now close at hand. It happened that one day he and Alypius received a visit from their Christian compatriot, Pontitianus, an official in the imperial household, who, chancing to notice a copy of St. Paul's Epistles lying on a table, expressed his delight, and proceeded to relate the experience of the hermit Antony, and to enlarge on the unworldly joys of a monastic life. He mentioned the fact that two courtiers, friends of his own, happening to be at Treves in attendance on the Emperor, had accidentally lighted upon the *Life of Antony*,[2] and had then and there relinquished both their career at court and their hopes of marriage in order to follow the saint's example.

[1] 8. 5. 10 : " Exarsi ad imitandum."

[2] The *Vita S. Antonii* is attributed to Athanasius, but its genuineness is doubtful. See authorities mentioned by Gibb and Montgomery, note on *Conf.* 8. 6. 14.

Pontitianus further told them of a flourishing monastery, situated close to Milan itself, of which they had apparently never even heard.

The conversation of Pontitianus stirred the soul of Augustine to its depths. Hitherto he had never seen himself as he really was in God's sight. Now, beholding himself in his true colours, he was overwhelmed by a burning sense of shame. He realized the miserable self-deceit of his former half-hearted prayer, "Give me chastity and continence, but not now." He discovered that what held him back from God was no longer uncertainty of mind but weakness of will. "For to go along that road and reach the goal is one with the *will to go*: but it must be a strong and undivided will; not a will fettered by the force of habit, broken-winged, fluttering hither and thither, rising with one pinion, struggling and falling with the other." [1] No longer could he delude himself with the Manichaean figment of two wills, corresponding to two natures, good and bad. He realized that he must make his choice once for all between the importunate desires of the flesh and the promptings of the spirit. So he hesitated, in an agony of irresolution: "this way and that dividing the swift mind." He quailed at the thought of "dying unto death and living unto life." The old Adam plucked at his garment: the old vanities whispered "Can you let us go? From that instant we shall see you no more for ever—for ever!" "But," says Augustine, "in that quarter towards which I had set my face, there dawned on me the chaste dignity of continence modestly alluring me, stretching out kindly hands to welcome me—hands full of good examples: smiling upon me as one who should say, Canst thou not do what these have done? Was it of themselves that they were enabled, and not rather of the Lord their God? . . . Cast thyself boldly on Him: fear not; He will not withdraw Himself and let thee fall. He will sustain thee and heal thee" (8. 11. 27).

The sequel is familiar to us all. The scene of his agony, a garden (*hortulus*); his sole companion Alypius, who stood watching him in silence. Presently he breaks away from his

[1] *Conf.* 8. 8. 19.

friend, and finding a solitary corner of the garden flings himself down under a fig tree and bursts into a passion of weeping. "How long, how long!" he wails. "To-morrow and to-morrow! Why not now? Why not in this very hour make an end of my vileness?" Suddenly he hears the voice of a child singing *Tolle, lege; tolle, lege.* It seems to him a voice from heaven bidding him "take up" the sacred volume and read the first passage that might catch his eye; such, he had been told, was the custom of Antony in moments of perplexity. Acting on the impulse he ran back to Alypius, caught up the book lying beside him, opened it and read in silence the words, *Not in rioting and drunkenness, not in chambering or wantonness, not in strife and envying: but put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ and make not provision for the flesh to fulfil the lusts thereof.*[1] As he reached the end of the sentence "the light of peace seemed to be shed" upon his heart; his doubts melted away. Closing the book he calmly told his friend what had happened. Alypius asked to see the text of St. Paul, and pointed to the following verse which seemed to apply specially to his own case: *Him that is weak in the faith receive ye.* At once, with less emotional disturbance but with equal steadfastness of purpose, he cast in his lot with Augustine. Together they sought Monnica and told her of their experience. "Thus," writes Augustine, "didst Thou turn her mourning into joy, far more amply than she had asked in her prayer: into joy far purer than that which had once been the object of her earthly ambition.[2]

Thus strangely did her dream that one day her son should take his stand beside her upon "the rule" of faith find its fulfilment.[3]

The ninth book of the *Confessions* perhaps strikes the reader as forming something of an anti-climax. It carries the narrative to a point some two years later, ending with an account of Monnica's illness and death. Augustine's conversion

[1] Rom. xiii. 13, 14.
[2] *Conf.* 8. 12. 30.
[3] *Conf.* 8. 12. 30; see 3. 11. 19.

apparently took place late in the summer of 386. His first object now was to resign his professorship of rhetoric; but he deferred that step until the so-called "vintage vacation" was over.[1] He was naturally anxious to avoid any step that might appear ostentatious, and he had a sufficient pretext for vacating his post in the enfeebled state of his health, which the climate of Milan had suited little better than that of Rome During this interval he retired with his mother, his son and Alypius to a country house at Cassiciacum,[2] lent to him by his friend and colleague Verecundus, who, though not yet a Christian, was baptized during his last illness which took place shortly after the incidents just narrated.

Released in due course from the drudgery of teaching, and retiring into comparative seclusion at Cassiciacum with a little group of relatives, friends and pupils under the motherly care of Monnica, Augustine devoted his time to literary work and produced several treatises "in a style" (he says) "which though already enlisted in the service of God yet breathed something of the pride of the school." Thus he sought and "found rest in God from the stress of the world." In the first book of the *Retractations* he gives a list of the writings which occupied him at this time; the three books *contra Academicos* the treatises *de ordine* and *de vita beata*; two books of *soliloquia*, a tract *de immortalitate*, together with a few epistles to Nebridius. There is a wide difference in tone between these works, which for the most part take the form of dialogues, and the *Confessions*—a difference which has puzzled some historians; it may, however, be explained by the fact that Augustine was still under the spell of Neoplatonism, and was inclined to minimize the distinction between its teaching and that of Christianity. Perhaps, too, he wished to show his old friends and pupils that in becoming a Catholic he had not ceased to be

[1] On the different vacations for the imperial tribunals see Gibb and Montgomery, p. 234. The "vintage vacation" extended from August 22 to October 15.

[2] Cassiciacum (or Cassisiacum) was probably situated in hilly country overlooking the plains and lakes of Lombardy. Possibly it commanded a distant view of Monte Rosa. Cp. Boissier, p. 366 f.

a lover of philosophy.[1] In any case the Dialogues describe or imply a state of things widely different from that which meets us in the *Confessions*; and as we are concerned only with the latter book we must not dwell on the free and animated discussions of the cheerful and high-spirited company which surrounded Augustine at Cassiciacum, just as a *coterie* of philosophical friends gathered round Cicero at Tusculum.[2] The *Soliloquies*, however, show us that Augustine's life at Cassiciacum had another side, and in the *Confessions* he describes himself as engaged in a life of solitary prayer and devotion, preparing for baptism. He dwells especially on the delight and solace which he found in the constant use of the Psalter. When writing to Ambrose to abjure his past errors, he asked the bishop to direct him in the reading of Scripture. Ambrose advised the study of Isaiah, but Augustine found this too difficult a task and laid it aside till he should be "better versed in the divine style of speech." In the following spring he returned to Milan and was baptized on Easter Eve (April 24), 387, together with Alypius and his son Adeodatus—the latter now a promising and gifted boy of fifteen, of whom Augustine speaks with affectionate sorrow and pride, writing as he does some years after his son's early death.[3] The period that followed was one of tranquil happiness, brightened and hallowed

[1] See Gibb and Montgomery, introd. pp. lxi. foll. Mr. Glover, *op. cit.* p. 215, observes that "In these [Dialogues] his language is not so avowedly Christian as in the *Confessions*, for he is still trying to couch the new thought in the old terms, but the new thought is there, and if not yet fully developed it is still Christian."

[2] See a charming description in Bright, *Lessons from the Lives of three Great Fathers*, p. 125 note. Cp. Boissier, p. 372 f.; Gibb and Montgomery, pp. lix. foll. In the literary and philosophical discussions, besides Augustine himself, his pupils Licentius, the witty and versatile son of Romanianus, and Trygetius took a prominent part, while Monnica and Adeodatus occasionally intervened. Notes were taken by a stenographer (*notarius*). M. Boissier, *op. cit.* 372, seems to suggest that in the Dialogues Augustine consciously imitates the "Tusculans."

[3] *Conf.* 9. 6. 14. Mr. Glover points out that names like "Adeodatus," "Deus dedit," "Deogratias" were "not uncommon in Africa, being apparently translations of Semitic names like Mattathiah, Nathanael and so forth" (p. 199).

by the worship, and especially by the psalmody, of the Church, which even before Augustine's conversion had often soothed his distress, melted his heart and awakened in him the wistful thirst for God.[1] He also mentions as a special token of divine favour, the fact that the discovery of the bodies of the martyrs Gervase and Protase took place at this time—an event which seems to have restrained the Arian Empress Justina from her persecution of Ambrose.[2]

The remainder of the ninth book is taken up with Augustine's recollections of his mother's last days. Both he and she had hoped to transplant in their native Africa the little community that had been formed at Cassiciacum. With this aim in view they quitted Milan, and had reached the port of Ostia on their homeward way when Monnica fell ill and died.[3] It so happened that a few days previously she had conversed with her son on the subject of the future life. The incident is described in some detail and forms a kind of climax to Augustine's autobiography.

He and his mother were leaning upon the ledge of a window overlooking the garden of their lodging. We may suppose that they had before them a prospect of the melancholy plain of the Campagna, bounded by the far-off range of the Alban hills, "in purple distance fair." They were conversing of "the eternal life of the saints" and of the loveliness and the radiance of Nature, bearing witness to the glories of the unchanging source of all Beauty and Truth. . . . "And so we came to our own minds and passed in thought beyond them into the region of plenty where Thou feedest Israel for ever with the food of truth, where life is the wisdom by which all these things came

[1] In 9. 7. 15 Augustine mentions the methods of psalmody and hymnody recently instituted at Milan. See an eloquent passage in Bertrand, *op. cit.* p. 245 : "La jeunesse des hymnes ! On ne peut y songer sans émotion. On envie Augustin de les avoir entendues dans leur fraîcheur virginale," etc.

[2] See the account, "graphic but hostile," in Gibbon, ch. xxvii.

[3] M. Bertrand thinks that possibly this step was hastened by the fact that the usurper Maximus was marching on Milan, the young Valentinian having taken refuge at Aquileia (*op. cit.* p. 276).

to be, and the life itself never 'comes to be' since it is as it was and evermore shall be. . . . And as we conversed and yearned after it we touched it for an instant with the whole force of our hearts; and we sighed, and left there, as it were, the first-fruits of the spirit, and descending again to earth, heard the sound of our own tongues—the sound of that speech which, unlike the eternal Word, has a beginning and an ending."

"Again we spoke. 'Suppose that heaven and earth with all that they contain were silent; suppose every tongue, every vision, every symbol, all that comes and goes, were hushed: that having delivered their creaturely message to mankind they should hold their peace, and that one voice only should make itself heard—the voice of Him whom we love in these His creatures, and whom we had touched with one flash of exalted intuition; suppose this silence should endure, and all lower modes of vision were taken away, and this alone were to ravish the beholder and absorb him in mystic joy: would not eternal life resemble this moment of comprehension—would not this be the meaning of the saying *Enter into the joy of thy Lord?*"

In the passage from which this extract is quoted Augustine gives us an account of what is virtually an "ecstasy" in the sense of Plotinus. It is a condition transcending thought: a stillness of the soul in which all consciousness of external objects is suspended, and "the seer no longer distinguishes himself from what he sees." It is obvious to recall the famous lines in which Wordsworth describes a somewhat similar experience—

> "that serene and blessed mood
> In which the affections gently lead us on,—
> Until, the breath of this corporeal frame
> And even the motion of our human blood
> Almost suspended, we are laid asleep
> In body, and become a living soul:
> While with an eye made quiet by the power
> Of harmony, and the deep power of joy,
> We see into the life of things."[1]

[1] *Lines composed above Tintern Abbey.* See the note in Gibb and Montgomery, p. 260.

At the same time we should notice that Augustine speaks of this mystical communion with the Divine not as the beatific vision itself, but only as a foretaste or sample of heavenly joy. From this point of view his comments on 1 St. John iii. 2 are instructive.[1]

Five days later Monnica was seized with fever. Foreseeing that her illness would be fatal she bade her two sons bury her where they would, thus relinquishing her long-cherished wish to be laid beside her husband in her native land.[2] She had, indeed, nothing more to live for. "My son," she had said a few days previously, "I find no further pleasure in life. Why I still linger here I know not, for earthly hope is dead within me. The one thing which made me desire to tarry a little longer was that I might see thee a catholic Christian. This boon my God has granted me in fullest measure. What do I, lingering here?" (9. 10. 26).

So Monnica passed away in her fifty-sixth year, having received in full measure the answer to her constant prayer. The rest of the ninth book is taken up with a description of her burial and of Augustine's grief. She had been his companion and comforter at the supreme crisis of his life: a woman, he says, "yet in faith so manful: having the tranquillity of age, the love of a mother, the devotion of a true Christian." It was a solace to him that in her last hours she had called him "her good son" (*pium*), adding that she had never heard from his lips a single angry or disrespectful word.

The concluding passage gives the substance of Augustine's prayer for his mother's soul, and begs that all readers of his

[1] *in Epist. Joannis ad Parthos*, iv. 5, 6.

[2] See Matthew Arnold's sonnet "Monica's last prayer":

> "Thus Monica, and died in Italy.
> Yet fervent had her longing been, through all
> Her course, for home at last, and burial
> With her own husband by the Libyan sea.
> Had been! but at the end, to her pure soul
> All tie with all beside seemed vain and cheap
> And union before God the only care."

Monnica was buried at Ostia, but in 1430 the Pope (Martin V) caused her remains to be removed to the church of S. Agostino at Rome,

book will remember Monnica, the handmaid of the Lord, at the altar, in accordance with her dying request.

At this point ends Augustine's autobiography. In Book X he scrutinizes his present spiritual condition, chiefly for the benefit of those who are likely to read the *Confessions* in what he calls "a brotherly spirit" (10. 4. 5). The closing chapter (10. 43. 70) recalls his frame of mind after his mother's death. He tells us how in the misery of his self-reproach and conscious weakness he had made up his mind to seek refuge in a solitary life: "Terrified by my sins and by the weight of my misery, I had planned that I would flee into the wilderness; but Thou didst not suffer me so to do, and didst enhearten me, saying *Therefore did Christ die for all that they which live should no longer live unto themselves, but unto Him that died for them.*" In his penitence he came to realize that for him a life of action was salutary, nay necessary: that he must not live for himself: that just as sin has a certain "social ubiquity," a kind of "pervasive omnipresence" which fearfully enlarges its power for evil,[1] so penitence has a social aspect and concerns all the children of God, removing barriers between man and his fellows and restoring interrupted fellowship. Thus Augustine was led to devote himself to the service of the Church, and he reflected that even his passionate desire for a deeper knowledge of scripture might be turned to good account: *usui vult esse fraternae charitati* (11. 2. 3).

The *Confessions* were apparently written soon after his elevation to the episcopate (395) when he was about forty-one or forty-two, his object being to refute calumnies which were based on the notorious facts of his past career. In the tenth book he seems to say, "Yes indeed; I am worse than you imagine, but not perhaps in the way that you imagine." His purpose, in fact, is not so much to confess or palliate his faults as to magnify the mercy of God. "C'est moins la honte de ses péchés qua la gloire de Dieu qu'il confesse," says M. Bertrand.[2] He wants his readers to fix their minds, not upon the

[1] Cp. Illingworth, *The Gospel Miracles*, appdx. 2, p. 204.

[2] *op. cit.* p. 364.

frailties of a fellow-sinner, but upon the magnificence of God's gift: the omnipotence of God's grace (10. 4. 5 foll.).

With the last three books of the *Confessions* we shall not be directly concerned. Most editions omit them. Dr. Bigg says of them that "They were not added by St. Augustine without a reason, for they contain his view on what may be called the 'higher criticism' of his day: his answer, the best attainable at that time, to some of the difficulties that beset the ever shifting problem of the relation of science to revelation."[1] In fact the books contain a commentary on Genesis i., and supply a typical specimen of that use of the allegorical method which Augustine had admired in the preaching of Ambrose, and which had certainly helped him to gain a truer insight into the meaning and function of the Old Testament.[2] Some use is made of these books in the late Mr. Juke's suggestive work, *The types of Genesis.*

In a very summary fashion let me complete the story of Augustine's career, the chief authority for which is the *Life* by Possidius, bishop of Calama [Guelma] near Hippo, who for forty years enjoyed Augustine's friendship and was with him during his last illness.[3]

Monnica's death seems to have taken place during the autumn of 387. For nearly a year Augustine lingered in Italy. He probably spent the interval at Rome in making a closer study of the Manichaean system, and finally embarked for Africa in August or September 388.

On reaching his native Thagaste, accompanied by his son and a few intimate friends and disciples, he proceeded to form in his own house a small religious community pledged to a life of prayer, study and self-discipline. He devoted some time

[1] *The Confessions of St. Augustine* (Methuen), p. 1.

[2] Note especially (a) the passionate prayer for a right understanding of Scripture, 11. 2. 3 foll.; (b) the passage in 11. 2. 4 "[Verbum tuum] Ipsum quaero in libris tuis. Moyses de illo scripsit. Hoc Ipse ait: hoc Veritas ait."

[3] See this in the Benedictine edition of Augustine's works, vol. x, pp. 257 foll.

to the revision of certain didactic treatises which he had begun in Italy, works concerned with "liberal studies" such as grammar, rhetoric and music, of which the last alone survives. "Thus," M. Bertrand observes, "the newly made monk drew up what may be called his testament as a professor."[1] To this period also belong many letters addressed to correspondents in Africa, Italy and elsewhere.

This interval of comparative repose may have lasted for about three years, during which the death of Adeodatus probably took place; but in 391 a chance visit to Hippo led to consequences which not infrequently occurred in those days. Augustine was forcibly detained and ordained presbyter, much against his inclination, by the bishop Valerius, an old man with few assistant clergy, who being himself a Greek and unable to speak Latin fluently, was very anxious to secure an able preacher to take his place.[2] Hitherto it had not been the custom in Africa for presbyters to preach, at least in the bishop's presence. Valerius was the first to break this tradition in favour of Augustine, who was at once entrusted with the duties (usually reserved for the bishop) of preaching and baptizing. He was allowed, however, to continue his semi-monastic way of life in a suitable house at Hippo, so far as his pastoral duties permitted.[3]

In 395 Valerius, fearing that Augustine might be removed elsewhere by some urgent demand for his services, designated him as his own coadjutor and successor. The primate of Numidia, Megalius, raised objections, based to some extent on scandalous charges against Augustine that were current in Africa; but ultimately he was induced to withdraw his accusations and to consecrate him bishop. A very full account of Augus-

[1] p. 292.

[2] In 11. 2. 2 he seems to allude to this incident but speaks with great reserve: "Quando autem sufficio lingua calami enuntiare omnia hortamenta tua et omnes terrores tuos et consolationes et gubernationes quibus me perduxisti praedicare verbum, et sacramentum tuum dispensare populo tuo?"

[3] Of all this he gives an account in *serm.* 355 (*de diversis*): "De vita et more clericorum," c. 2.

tine's episcopal career is supplied by his friend Possidius, who has much to relate of his mode of life, his gifts as a preacher, his vast literary labours, his persistent struggle with Manichaeans, Donatists, Pelagians and other heretics. Although the see of Hippo was inferior in dignity to Carthage, he was regarded in his own day as the leading figure not merely of the African Church but of Western Christendom generally. It is a historical truism to add that in later times he was justly acknowledged to be " the most commanding personality of the ancient Church, perhaps of the Church in any age."[1] But the whole of his later career lies outside the natural limits of our subject; a fascinating sketch of it may be found in the work of M. Louis Bertrand to which I have already referred, or in Dr. Bright's lecture on " St. Augustine " in *Lessons from the Lives of three great Fathers*.[2] It only remains to mention that in 410 took place the sack of Rome by Alaric—a portentous event, one consequence of which was the flight to Africa of innumerable refugees, many of them belonging to the educated and ruling classes of the empire. Many of these enforced exiles loudly denounced the religion of Christ as the cause of the unexampled catastrophe which had befallen the imperial city, and it was partly as an answer to their complaints that Augustine began to write (about 412 or 413) : that most impressive indictment of Paganism, the *de civitate Dei*. This immense work occupied him during thirteen years. At frequent intervals throughout that period Africa was devastated by irregular hordes of barbarians; but in 429 Genseric and his Vandals crossed from Spain, summoned to his support by Boniface, the Count of Africa. Boniface had apparently been betrayed into revolt by the machinations of his rival Aetius, and had invited Genseric to aid him in repelling the imperial forces which had been sent against him. Too late Boniface made his peace with the Empire and vainly strove, first by negotiation, then by actively resisting the Vandals, to undo the consequences of his

[1] Bp. Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, p. 181.
[2] Longmans, 1890.

fatal policy. Ultimately he was defeated and driven into Hippo with the remnant of his Gothic mercenaries. The life of Augustine thus closed amid the horrors of a siege. He had stedfastly refused to seek his personal safety in flight; and as he was already failing in health he quickly fell a victim to the burden of fresh cares and sufferings. He was seized with fever in August and passed away on the 28th of that month, 430, having been bishop of Hippo for thirty-five years.[1]

Augustine's career indeed as a priest and bishop, as an administrator and theologian, belongs to the history of the Church. The narrative of his early life and conversion is the history of a spiritual combat: of an individual soul's redemption; and, as such, appeals to religious minds of every age. It shows how diverse and unexpected are the ways by which God draws men to Himself. It illustrates some lines of Wordsworth with which I may fittingly conclude this survey of a wonderful career:

> "As men from men
> Do, in the constitution of their souls,
> Differ, by mystery not to be explained;
> And as we fall by various ways, and sink
> One deeper than another, self-condemned,
> Through manifold degrees of guilt and shame;
> So manifold and various are the ways
> Of restoration, fashioned to the steps
> Of all infirmity, and tending all
> To the same point, attainable by all—
> Peace in ourselves, and union with our God."[2]

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[1] For an account of Augustine's last days see Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 2. 127 f., "Augustine and the Vandals."

[2] *The Excursion*, bk. iv.

III

THE INFLUENCE ON AUGUSTINE OF MANICHAEISM AND NEO-PLATONISM

AUGUSTINE is never weary of reminding himself that his had been a guided life. He thankfully recognizes that a divine providence has planned each detail and ordered each successive stage in his soul's history. Early in the *Confessions* he prays that all useful learning which he has acquired, everything that at any time he has read or uttered, written or reckoned, may be employed in God's service.[1] The providence of God had disciplined him even when he was acquiring vain and useless knowledge: had overruled for good even the mistaken methods of his early teachers: had watched over him in sickness: had restrained him from manifold forms of sin: had aided him to escape from the snares of Manichaeism: had led him to Rome and thence to Milan: had brought him into contact with Ambrose. It was to this directing providence, controlling each incident in his own career and in that of his friends, that he appealed with tears and supplication when overwhelmed by difficulties and perplexities.[2] This it was that induced him to welcome the Scriptures as a God-given aid to human weakness (6. 5. 8). When in the garden he heard the child's voice singing *Tolle, lege; tolle lege,* he felt that he was "divinely instructed" to take up the book and read. Again and again throughout his past life he had proved the

[1] *Conf.* 1. 15. 24. "My speaking, my writing, my reading, my arithmetic" (Bigg).

[2] Cp. *de util. cred.* 8. 20; and see what he says of Alypius, *Conf.* 6. 7. 12; 9. 14.

truth of His own words *Nos quaesisti, non quaerentes te; quaesisti autem ut quaereremus te* (II. 2. 4).[1]

In its manifold illustration of the truth of this conviction lies the supreme interest of Augustine's autobiography. The stedfast belief in a particular providence runs like a thread of gold through the account of all his various phases of faith. "I believed," he says, "sometimes more firmly, sometimes more faintly; yet this did I always believe that Thou art, and that Thou hast a care for us, even though I knew not what to think about Thy nature or what road leads, or leads back, to Thee (6. 5. 8)." Augustine's experience reminds one of an aphorism in *John Inglesant:* "The supreme effort of the divine mercy is that which shapes the faltering and unconscious actions of men into a beneficent and everlasting work."[2]

From this point of view let us briefly review the different influences which successively acted upon him.

(1) His parentage is noteworthy: a pagan father and a Christian mother: his father well-intentioned but worldly in his outlook and in his ambitions for his son; his mother, devout but uneducated, unqualified by her own training to guide or even understand him, vaguely hoping that the course of his studies would lead him in the direction of a consistent and morally fruitful faith in Christ.[3] Under these influences Augustine's education is specialized with a view to his embarking upon a professional career as a teacher of rhetoric—a career which seemed to offer lucrative and even brilliant pros-

[1] Cp. A.G.V. Allen, *Life of Phillips Brooks*, 2. p. 871. "Less and less I think" [says Phillips Brooks] "grows the consciousness of seeking God. Greater and greater grows the certainty that He is seeking us . . . That is love—not that we loved Him, but that He loved us."

[2] Shorthouse, *John Inglesant*, p. 403. Cp. *Conf.* 3. 11. 19, "O tu bone omnipotens, qui sic curas unumquemque nostrum tanquam solum cures, et sic omnes tanquam singulos!" Cp. 6. 7. 12 (Providence guarding Alypius).

[3] Boissier, *op. cit.*, p. 343. "Il recut dès ses premières années deux impulsions contraires qui me semblent expliquer les indécisions et les contradictions dans lesquelles s'est passée sa jeunesse."

pects, but which, as he soon discovered, required exceptional gifts and powers both of body and mind.[1]

(2) We may observe next an accidental result of this training: Augustine's study of Cicero's lost work *Hortensius*, which awakened in him, as he tells us, the thirst for true wisdom and ultimately impelled him to pursue his search for truth in the study of Scripture.

The art of rhetoric, as it was understood in the fourth century, included a smattering of what was called "philosophy"; but unlike most students who were quite content to "take wisdom at second hand"[2] and to play with philosophy in a dilettante fashion for the purposes of lecturing or disputation, Augustine was fired by a serious passion for the discovery of truth. The reading of Cicero's book formed a decisive epoch in his spiritual history: it appealed to his dormant religious instinct: "it changed my prayers," he says; "it altered my desires and aims; I began to rise that I might return to Thee" (3. 4. 7).

(3) Thirdly, Manichaeism played as we know, a very notable part in Augustine's mental and spiritual development. In this strange and alluring system he found something more satisfying than the shallow and unsubstantial moral philosophy current in the schools of rhetoric: something more precise and definite than Cicero's praise of wisdom: namely a systematic cosmology; a solution—claiming to be "rational"—of the world-problem viewed as a whole; in one word, an explanation of the meaning of life. In fact Manichaeism professed to give just that of which the world stood chiefly in need: an *authoritative* revelation of truth: a coherent doctrine of redemption: a solution of the pressing problem of evil. To the teachings of this influential sect Augustine surrendered himself as a youth of nineteen and remained "a hearer" till his twenty-eighth year.

(4) Next, in despair of discovering the truth which he sought, Augustine yielded to a reactionary mood and surrendered

[1] See Hatch, *The Influence of Greek Ideas and Usages upon the Christian Church* (Hibbert Lectures for 1888), lect. II.

[2] Hatch, *op. cit.* p. 33.

himself to the influence of the Academics. Already some study of Aristotle's Logic and Physics had tended to emancipate his thought from positive error: it weaned him from the empty and pretentious metaphysic of Manichaeism; but it could not answer those "obstinate questionings" by which he was constantly beset. Thus, the agnosticism of the Academic school responded to a sceptical mood which proved to be only a transient phase in his mental development.

(5) Next, his accidental introduction to certain Neo-Platonic treatises, which he studied in the Latin version of his compatriot Victorinus Afer, brought him, as we have seen, to the very threshold of the Church.

(6) Finally, the influence of Ambrose, together with opportunities for observing the practical working of the catholic system, led Augustine to a new and more intelligent comprehension of the scope and purpose of Scripture. Thus was he gradually brought to a conviction of the force of the Church's claim; he came to realize that the catholic doctrines of the Incarnation and of Grace responded to pressing and vital needs of human nature, while to himself they offered a way of escape from moral impotence and paralysing scepticism.

There is no need to discuss all these different forms of influence in detail. Three of them, however, call for closer consideration in so far as they left a lasting impress on Augustine's idea of religion. What, we may ask, was the permanent effect on his mind and character of his prolonged adherence to Manichaeism, his ardent study of Neo-Platonism, his gradual submission to the influence of Ambrose?

And first, what of Manichaeism? Why did it so powerfully attract him and what did it contribute to his thought?

There is a passage in the *de utilitate credendi*—addressed to his friend Honoratus—in which Augustine (writing about 391) gives a succinct account of what the Manichaean teachers professed to offer, and of the specious appeal which their system made to restless and inquiring minds like that of Honoratus himself.[1]

[1] *de util. cred.* 1. 2: "Qua, quaeso, alia re delectatus es, nisi magna

"You know" he writes "that we adhered to these men on no other ground than this—that they promised by pure and simple reason to bring their disciples to God, discarding all peremptory authority, and to liberate them from error. For what else made me reject for almost nine years continuously the religion my parents had instilled into me as a child? What else made me a follower and diligent 'hearer' of this sect, than their assertion that we Catholics are terrorized by superstition and that faith is thrust upon us before any reason is given; whereas *they* bind none to believe except upon the truth's being examined and made clear? By such promises who would not have been inveigled? especially the mind of a young man, desirous to know the truth, and already, through disputation with clever persons in the schools, grown proud and talkative: just such an one, indeed, as they found *me:* contemning religion as an old wives' fable and eager to apprehend and drink in the very truth which they so confidently promised."

Apart, however, from its pretension to reveal "the truth," Manichaeism appealed to thoughtful enquirers as an organized system of practical religion. It is believed to have had its roots in a primitive form of Semitic Nature-worship, modified by Persian and even by Christian elements,[1] but it entered the lists against Christianity as a rival Church, practising a rival "holy religion." In spite of attempts on the part of Emperors and Popes, and later of the Mohammedan power, to suppress it, Manichaeism spread everywhere, from the East to Spain. Its votaries formed a kind of hidden and secret community,

quadam praesumptione ac pollicitatione rationum?"; cp. 9. 21. On the *de util. cred.* see *Retract* 1. 1. 4. Augustine says he wrote the book when a presbyter at Hippo to a friend ensnared by Manichaean error, who objected to the Catholic system "that men were required to *believe*, but were not taught by sound reasoning what was actually true."

[1] On this point see G. and M., introd. pp. xxi. foll. Mani (who died *c.* 277) "certainly borrowed much from other religions with which he came into touch during his missionary travels—from Zoroastrianism, from Mandaeism, and, in ethics, from Buddhism" (xxv.) "For nearly 1,000 years it remained a living force" (xxxi.).

bound together by unworldly aims and the profession of an austere and ascetic morality. As regards its organization, the disciples of the sect gradually advanced by fixed gradation to membership of a privileged order of "saints" or "elect": pledged to rigid abstinence from animal food, strong drink, marriage and the acquisition of property.[1] As to its theology, it may suffice to observe that in two respects it was calculated to meet the difficulties commonly felt by religious-minded inquirers.

(i.) On the one hand it offered a dualistic explanation of the universe. It solved the harassing problem of evil—its nature and origin—by simply denying the responsibility of man's will for the aberrations of the flesh. Spirit alone was good and really existent: matter was evil and illusory. Moreover, the opposition between light and darkness, good and evil, adapted itself readily to Christian ideas and phraseology. Manichaeism had its "Christology"; its doctrine of redemption; its promise of immortality; its manifestation of "the Paraclete." Hence it is probable that not merely Pagans, but many imperfectly taught Christians yielded to the fascination of a theory which insisted that evil was a merely physical power, to be overcome by a force equally physical; and that the spiritual struggle proceeding in every human heart and will was merely a particular episode in a perennial conflict between light and darkness. Manichaeism in fact ignored any distinction between the physical and the ethical. Religious knowledge virtually meant knowledge of Nature; redemption was a quasi-physical process, namely, deliverance of the detached portions of light from darkness; and the moral life consisted primarily in rigid abstinence from all elements belonging to the realm of darkness.[2]

[1] This "ostentatio continentiae" was specially attractive to some: e.g. Alypius. *Conf.* 6. 7. 12. Vegetable food was used as the sole diet as containing "particles of light" whereas "dead flesh was composed entirely of darkness."

[2] On Manichaeism, see Harnack, *Hist. of Dogma*, vol. 3. 316 foll. (appendix on Manichaeism); Schaff, *Hist. of the Church, Ante-Nicene Christianity*, vol. 2; for a list of authorities, Gibb and Montgomery, xxi. note.

(ii.) Again, like Marcionism, the Manichaean system was fanatically anti-Jewish. In particular it made much of the stumblingblock which the Old Testament presented to thoughtful and devout minds, and claimed to be a pure form of Christian faith, unencumbered by allegiance to the ancient Scriptures. Augustine observes that in this respect especially it disturbed the faith of simple believers: *Maxime Vetus Testamentum discerpentes et dilaniantes commovent imperitos.*[1] He himself for years had found in the Hebrew representations of Deity, in the apparent ascription to the Deity of visible form, quasi-physical actions and creaturely affections—an invincible obstacle to faith; and Manichaeism seemed to offer a religion suited to the needs of the "educated": a religion superficially Christian in content and in ethical ideals, yet at the same time entirely "rational," and affording scope for free inquiry.

I have already indicated the train of thought which gradually emancipated Augustine from the thraldom of Manichaean error. Probably his study of Aristotle was the most potent factor in his change of mind.[2] As Prof. Harnack points out, his innate tendency towards "the empirical and the real won the victory, so soon as Aristotle—the great logician and inquirer into Nature—came to his aid." He discovered that the astrological lore of the Manichaeans was mere imposture; and he began to perceive that the whole system rested on a basis of physical mythology, corresponding to nothing at all in the real universe.[3] Finally, his intercourse with Faustus completed the process of disillusionment. He was already disgusted with the hollow pretentiousness of the system when he entered on his work at Milan, and as soon as he had the opportunity of studying Catholicism at close quarters, under the guidance of Ambrose, it was inevitable that he should sever

[1] *de util.* 2. 4.

[2] In *Conf.* 4, 16. 28 he tells us that, when he was about twenty, he carefully studied the "Categories," as Plotinus and Porphyry had done before him. Porphyry's "Introduction" to the Categories is still extant. See Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philosophy*, 1. 251; G. and M. p. 103.

[3] Harnack, *A. K.*, p. 20. Cp. *Conf.* 3. 6. 10., 11: "Omnino non sunt," "Omnino nulla sunt."

his connection with the sect which had ensnared him for so long.

We must remember that Augustine was only an immature and impressionable youth when he first felt the fascination of the Manichaean system. He was introduced to it at an age which is proverbially impatient of authority and eager for a "rational" solution of all possible intellectual and moral problems. Moreover, the Manichaean theory of sin was soothing to a lax conscience, and Augustine had neither the intellectual outfit nor the moral insight to detect at once the essentially unspiritual character of this new theology. But though he escaped from the bondage of youthful error, it is noticeable that a permanent consequence of his connection with the Manichaeans seems to survive in Augustine's later doctrine of sin and grace : a doctrine which unquestionably retains a certain element of dualism. Prof. Harnack's assertion, indeed, that he never wholly surmounted Manichaeism is scarcely disputable.[1] We find traces of it in those familiar antitheses which he read into the teaching of St. Paul and to which he gave currency in western theology : nature and grace, divine predestination and human freedom, the *civitas Dei* (ultimately identified with the Church) and the *civitas terrena*, which for him was embodied in imperial Rome. There is also, we may think, a remnant of Manichaean thought in Augustine's moral theology : in his severely ascetic conception of holiness, his undue exaltation of virginity, his depreciation of marriage,—indeed, in his entire attitude towards those instincts of human nature which marriage at once hallows and educates. But we may discern something of the Manichaean standpoint particularly in Augustine's pessimistic idea of the world. In the *de utilitate credendi* he makes the remark that the Manichaeans are *obsessed* by the idea of evil ! "While they devote themselves overmuch to the problem, Whence is evil ? they discover nothing but evil."[2] It is fair to ask whether there is not a

[1] See Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 102 and 211 note. ; also Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, pp. 115 foll.

[2] *de util. cred.* 18. 3b : "Qui dum nimis quaerunt unde sit malum, nihil reperiunt nisi malum."

decided trace of this tendency in Augustine himself. Not only does he discourage what we should call the scientific spirit. He sometimes writes as if civilization itself had no independent value. Detachment from earth and its concerns is exalted as the supreme duty. In Augustine's view, all external conditions are indifferent as compared with the soul's inward relation to God. The possession of property is regarded, not as a means of fulfilling social duty, but as a hindrance to the spiritual life of the individual; celibacy is an infinitely higher state than wedded life.[1] Certainly the idea of acting upon the world not by withdrawal from it, but by earnest endeavours to transform it, is not altogether absent, but on the whole the ascetic tendency is paramount and as Eucken says "paralyses all effort for social reform."[2] Augustine often writes as if evil were supreme in the physical world, and pre-eminently in the sphere of sexual relationships. He appears to forget, or at least he never tries to co-ordinate with this desponding view of Nature, what he elsewhere maintains, viz. the view that the world, being the handiwork of God, is good: and that even the worst sin is in one aspect the expression of an inarticulate desire for some form of good. Accordingly we are forced to the conclusion that Augustine never entirely liberated himself from the consequences of his earlier misbelief; and there is some truth in Eucken's observation that, so far as his influence extends, an element of Manichaeism was grafted upon Christianity which is apt to assert itself even to this day.[3] When we read the celebrated passage in the *de civitate Dei* (19. 4–8) beginning "For who is sufficient, with whatsoever torrent of eloquence he possesses, to set forth at length the miseries of this present

[1] R. Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 236. Cp. Webb, *A History of Philosophy*, p. 103: "No less social ideal has ever been put forward than that of the ardent lover of God, who casts aside one lesser good after another, which he finds not to be the one original and supreme goodness, until, unencumbered by anything that can distract him from the object of his quest, he takes his flight, in the words of Plotinus himself, 'alone to the Alone.'"

[2] Eucken, p. 234.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 229.

life?"[1] we realize how over-strained is Augustine's sense of the pervasiveness and dominance of evil in human life. So far as I have discovered there is nothing in his writings quite parallel to a noble outburst of feeling which is recorded of Lacordaire:

"Once a real Christian, the world did not vanish before my eyes: it rather assumed nobler proportions as I myself did. Instead of a mere empty fleeting theatre of ambition, alike petty whether deluded or achieved, I began to see therein a noble sufferer needing help; a mighty misfortune resulting from all sorrows of ages past and to come; and I could imagine nothing comparable to the happiness of ministering to it, under the eye of God with the help of the Cross and the Gospel of Christ."[2]

It is true that Augustine wrote his *de civitate* in days when the entire fabric of civilization seemed to be tottering to its fall. It was not easy for him to distinguish those signs of the times that foreshadowed the rise of a new, a nobler and a more stable order of human society. Nevertheless there is something surprising in Augustine's pessimistic view of the State—the *civitas terrena*. He sometimes speaks as if there was an impassable gulf fixed between the two societies—the *civitas Dei* and the earthly Commonwealth. He forgets their necessary interdependence: he overlooks the moral functions of the State and its contribution to the higher life of mankind. He regards the Empire as the very embodiment of evil—as a "great brigandage" (*grande latrocinium*), as "the mystic Babylon," and as a very "kingdom of the devil." Whatever is good in the State, whatever makes for its stability and coherence, he claims for the true *civitas*, the Church.[3] This is a view of the State which surely undermines what we may call its natural or philosophic basis. It is, of course, true that Augustine is by no means always consistent with himself: but it is strange that having so vivid a consciousness

[1] For his earlier and less pessimistic view see *c. Epist. Fund.* 36 and 43.
[2] H. S. Lear, *Life of Lacordaire*, p. 34.
[3] See Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, pp. 209 foll.

of the way in which a divine providence had guided and overruled his own wayward steps, he has so little perception of the sovran power which overrules even the chequered history of earthly States and human institutions towards the fulfilment of a purpose of moral good.[1] We find a far more bold and hopeful view of the State in Dante's *de monarchia*. "In Dante's philosophy," writes Dean Church, "the institutions which provide for man's peace and liberty in this life are part of God's great order for raising men to perfection; not indispensable, but ordinary parts; having their important place, though but for the present time; and though imperfect, real instruments of His moral government. He could not believe it to be the intention of Providence that on the introduction of higher hopes and the foundation of a higher society, civil society should collapse, and be left to ruin, as henceforth useless or prejudicial in man's trial and training."[2]

I have indicated some elements, and some consequences, of the dualism which lingers in Augustine's view of the world.

Unquestionably this remnant of Manichaean thought powerfully influenced Augustine's later thought, and even became imbedded in his system of theology. Nevertheless we must not overlook the lasting services which he rendered to faith by his anti-Manichaean polemic: his vindication of the Old Testament and of the divine wisdom which accommodated itself to the crude beliefs and moral ideas of early Hebrew religion: his masterly analysis of sin as a defect of will, and his repudiation of a merely physical theory of moral evil;[3] his defence of the reasonableness of faith as a principle of action; his insistence on the reality of the Incarnation and the interdependence of matter and spirit.

[1] But see *de civ. Dei*, 5. 11.

[2] R. W. Church, *Dante and other Essays* (Macmillan & Co.), p. 93. Cp. Whewell, *The Elements of Morality*, bk. V. ch. 3 "The moral character of the State."

[3] On the view constantly expressed by Augustine that "evil is nothing" see Dr. Bright's *Lessons from the Lives of Three Great Fathers*, appendix xv. (p. 271), which embodies some criticisms by Dr. J. B. Mozley.

Respecting Augustine's brief adhesion (if it can be so called) to the tenets of the New Academy, we have already seen that they appealed to him only while he was passing through a phase of despondency and scepticism. We may remark, however, that at this stage his persistent habit of self-scrutiny stood him in good stead. The Academics were credited with the opinion that no knowledge of reality is possible: all is uncertain and the idea of attaining to truth is a delusion (5. 10. 19).[1] But Augustine, like Descartes, came to the conclusion that it was simply impossible to doubt one's own existence: life, thought and feeling in man are interdependent and co-ordinate functions: *Et sumus, et nos esse novimus et id esse ac nosse diligimus.*[2] Some form of knowledge, then, is attainable, and Augustine was ultimately led from the scrutiny of his own consciousness to infer the existence of an eternal Reason, which is the light of men, the source and object of human intelligence. "This light," he says, "was higher than I because it made me; and I was lower than it because made by it. He who knows the truth knows the light, and he who knows that light, knows eternity. Love knows that light, for it is God Himself, the eternal truth, true love and lovely eternity" (7. 10. 16). Thus through the analysis of his own mental constitution, Augustine found a path which ultimately led him to Christ.

In this statement, however, we are anticipating. What led him to form the conception of a transcendent mind which he identified with God was a study of the "books of the Platonists" (7. 9. 13), evidently comprising some portion at least of the *Enneads* of Plotinus, whose system virtually embodies the whole substance of Platonism—nay, the very spirit of Plato himself.[3]

[1] Cp. Bacon, *Nov. Org.* 1. 75: "Hinc schola academiae novae quae *acatalepsiam* ex professo tenuit, et homines ad sempiternas tenebras damnavit."

[2] *de civ.* 11. 26. Through this analysis of personality Augustine finds in man an image of the Divine Trinity. See also *Conf.* 13. 11. 12: "Esse," "nosse," "velle" in man form a Trinity: *de util.* 8. 20 and *de Trin.* 11. 16. (memory, thought, will).

[3] See Bigg, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 189. In *c. Acad.* 3. 18. 41 Augustine says: "Os illud Platonis quod in philosophia purgatissimum est et

The rise of Neo-Platonism marks the point at which ancient philosophy virtually passed over into Theology. Greek speculation had hitherto concerned itself with problems of the visible universe: in early times, those connected with its origin and physical constitution; later, those which were suggested by the nature and capacities of man, e.g. the relation of language to thought and of reason to reality, in other words the problem of knowledge. But in the last stage of its development Greek philosophy directed its thoughts heavenward and Godward. "All that was elevated and noble, all that it had achieved in the course of its long activity, it combined in a bold idealistic system and in the summons to a life of blessedness."[1] Men were now plainly called upon to submit to the authority of a divine revelation of truth: the truth that God, the one and only reality, must of necessity manifest *Himself;* that the sensible world is only semblance and parable; that moral evil consists in alienation from God, and that the ascent to Him is the one worthy aim of human endeavour; that the way of ascent lies through self-discipline and contemplation, by which at last, in an ineffable "ecstasy" or excess of thought, it is possible for the soul to attain to divine communion: to be embraced, as it were, by God and immersed in His light. So may the soul find itself at last, as Plotinus expressed it, "alone with the Alone": in living contact with "that which is." The well-known chapter in the *Confessions* (9. 10) which records Augustine's last conversation with his mother at Ostia, is an attempt to describe an experience similar to an "ecstasy" in the Neo-Platonic sense.

In Neo-Platonism, then, culminates the tendency of Greek Philosophy towards religious idealism: a tendency, that is, to conceive of truth, goodness, beauty, reality as belonging to a

lucidissimum, dimotis nubibus emicuit, maxime in Plotino, qui Platonicus philosophus ita ejus similis judicatus est . . . ut in hoc ille revixisse putandus sit." Cp. F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 1. 23 foll. Gibb and Montgomery, pp. xxxix., note 2, point out that the reading of Plotinus probably led Augustine to study the writings of Plato. He must have been familiar, they suggest, with Cicero's Latin version of the *Timaeus*.

[1] Harnack, *A.K.*, p. 24.

supra-mundane sphere, the world of intelligence (*κόσμος νοητός*), and to regard the visible world of sense as imperfectly real and therefore only partially knowable. Thus to the Neo-Platonists the "obstinate questionings" prompted by religion were of primary interest, and their system of thought was essentially a theology.[1] Unhappily it contained elements of a baser sort, which survived side by side with this lofty spiritual mysticism. In the background of Plotinus' thought lies the whole of polytheism, with its gross superstitions, its credulity, its belief in magic, astrology and demonology. Plotinus, it is true, rather tolerated Paganism as the religion of the vulgar than commended or approved it. But Porphyry (d. *c.* 300) appears to have been a convinced believer in the malignant activity of demons, in the use of spells and amulets, and in other crude superstitions which, as Augustine remarks, were rather Chaldaean than Greek.[2] It remained for Iamblichus (d. *c.* 330) seriously to attempt the restoration of the gods of the old Pantheon, while the emperor Julian (d. 363) sealed by his perverted and reactionary policy the unnatural alliance between philosophy and paganism. Nevertheless, in its leading ideas and tendency, Neo-Platonism was a refined and even sublime system, perhaps (it has been said) "intellectually and morally the most perfect system of belief outside Christianity that the world has known."[3] Noteworthy in particular is its recog-

[1] *de civitate* 8. 10: "In quo autem nobis consentiunt de uno Deo huius universitatis auctore, qui non solum super omnia corpora est incorporeus, verum etiam super omnes animas incorruptibilis, principium nostrum, lumen nostrum, bonum nostrum: in hoc eos [Platonicos] caeteris anteponimus."

[2] *de civitate* 10. 27. Brightman in *Early History of the Church and Ministry*, 341, note 2, says: "Both within and without the Church, men's minds were obsessed by the sense of the presence and operation of demons in the world": see e.g. Tert., *Apol.* 22 and Porphyry in Euseb., *Praep. evang.* iv. 22.

[3] Mr. Glover calls it "The greatest of all heathen systems, recognizing and satisfying every impulse and energy of the human mind, except inquiry. It felt the unity of nature, the divinity of man as God's kinsman, the beauty of a morality modelled after God, the appetite of the human heart for God, and something of man's hunger for redemption" (*op. cit.*, p. 14).

nition of feeling or emotion as fulfilling a necessary function in the apprehension of Deity. Herein it succeeded in rising above the habitual "intellectualism" of ancient thought. It stood in marked contrast to the hard and sterile doctrine of the Stoics. For in its exaltation of mystic emotion it came near to touching the common springs of moral action and thus found a point of contact with the religion of the Gospel.

Neo-Platonism came near, I say, to this point, but somehow it fell short of exercising any effective moral influence. At best it appealed only to the wise and the cultured: it had no message for the simple and the sin-laden. It offered no way of salvation other than that of divine contemplation. Indeed, its tendency was to despise the visible scene in which human beings are called to act, to suffer, to make moral decisions, as a comparatively insignificant region in which detailed guidance or direction was needless and quite unworthy of a philosopher's attention. Thus it came about that, while in one of its aspects, namely as the religion of the One true God, Christianity powerfully appealed to the Neo-Platonist, in another aspect, regarded namely as a practical system educating the will and moulding character, it excited his jealousy, or even a feeling of rivalry. To this impulse perhaps was partly due Julian's ill-starred attempt to revive the decadent Pagan worship, and to encourage philanthropic effort in various centres of the Empire.

On the other hand Christian instinct quickly recognized the affinity between the fundamental ideas of the Gospel and those of Neo-Platonism. Each system claimed to be the climax and completion of all systems: to be, in fact, the "absolute" or final religion. The Neo-Platonists, like the Christians, looked upon the visible universe as a manifestation of spirit, which was the only reality. Their system bore witness (as against Stoicism) to the transcendence of Deity. Moreover their tendency was to distrust man's unassisted search after God; they laid stress upon the necessity of *revelation*. Plotinus, as we know, so far approached Christian theology as to recognize a Triad or Trinity in the divine hierarchy: *the One* (identical

with the Good); *Intelligence, i.e.* the living world of ideas, the pattern of the sensible world; the *World-Soul, i.e.* the principle which imparts unity and movement to the created universe.

Again, Neo-Platonism displayed in a marked degree that concentration of interest upon the individual soul towards which philosophy had tended ever since the break-up of the political life of the various Greek states: a feature which was naturally characteristic of the Christian religion with its keen sense of the sacred worth of personality. Plotinus at least formed a lofty estimate of the spiritual faculties of a creature ideally capable of attaining to mystic union with the divine life. Finally, there was one broad general principle common to both systems: namely, the principle of mediation. Augustine expressly testifies that the "Platonists" made much of the doctrine of the Logos, which they held to be identical with the archetypal pattern of the world.

At this point, however, emerges one broad and vital difference between the Christian and the Neo-Platonic theory. In the view of the Church the mystery of mediation was a religiously and ethically fruitful principle; it bore directly upon human character and life. The later Platonism, on the other hand, so expanded the idea as in effect to widen indefinitely the gulf that severed the Creator from His works. To Plotinus it appeared inconceivable that the immutable "One" should act upon the many except as a principle of *attraction*. It could not go after the lost sheep: at best it would draw all things towards itself; whereas the Gospel proclaimed an actual descent of Deity into the very heart of the world to redeem, to heal and to aid the aspiring will of man: an Incarnation of the Divine, uniting matter and spirit. Such an idea was wholly uncongenial to Neo-Platonic thought: indeed pagan Neo-Platonism used its influence to revive the gnostic fantasy of a chain of mediators; its whole tendency being to remove the divine nature as far as possible from any possible contact with the material universe.[1]

[1] Dr. J. R. Illingworth (*The Gospel Miracles*, p. 155) points out that Plotinus' thought remained Greek in supposing that perfection must

Let us try to estimate the influence of Platonism on the religious thought of Augustine. Certainly its effect was very far-reaching.

(1) It suggested to his mind the possibility of a spiritual substance. While still under the influence of Manichaeism he was, as we have seen, literally obsessed by materialistic ideas of the divine nature. He imagined that God was in some sense corporeal: possessed of some subtle form of body, permeating the world and diffused through infinite space outside the world. At one time he conceived that God was related to the world as a vast ocean might be to a sponge: pervading it, encompassing it and saturating it, so to speak, with His own infinite substance.[1] It was from this crude realism that Platonism finally emancipated him, by directing his attention to the phenomena of *mind* and *personality*. "Under the guidance of these books," he says, "I was admonished to return into myself. Guided by Thee, I entered into the secret places of my soul . . . and I beheld with the mysterious eye of my soul the light that never changes, a light above the eye of my soul, above my intelligence" (7. 10. 16). So he was led on step by step from matter to the mind which perceives it; thence to the

imply *remoteness* from the world, with all the unreality which this involves. "The Divine transcendence must involve aloofness"; whereas the Hebrew prophets (and the Church) move in a moral atmosphere. They are concerned with God's living relation to men. Mr. C. C. J. Webb suggests (*History of Philosophy*, p. 96) that Neo-Platonism was also actuated by a *controversial* desire to revive Paganism by giving philosophic recognition to a host of divine beings of various grades. He points out that this tendency reacted to some extent on subsequent theology, e.g. in the celestial hierarchy of the Areopagite, in the cultus of saints and angelology of popular Catholicism.

Cp. Baron F. von Hügel, *M.E.R.* 1. 25: "The system in its ultimate upshot and trend is thus profoundly anti-Immanental, anti-Incarnational; a succession of increasingly exalted and increasingly empty Transcendencies, each of which is, as it were, open upwards but closed downwards, takes the place of all deliberate operations and self-expressions of the higher in and through the lower, hence of all preveniencies and condescensions of God."

[1] *Conf.* 7. 5. 7. His only notion of substance was of something sensible and extended. He understood "infinite extension" as meaning a kind of all-pervading ether.

soul's innate power of perception ; thence again to the faculty of intelligence ; ultimately rising to the conception of a supra-mundane and transcendent intelligence and to the vision of real being : *id quod est* (7. 17. 23—a strongly Plotinian passage[1]).

Neo-Platonism, then, suggested to Augustine's mind for the first time the possibility of a spiritual or immaterial substance. " I was taught by these books to seek for the incorporeal truth, and I beheld Thy invisible things, understood by means of the things that are made ; and though cast back, I *felt* (*sensi*) what the dullness of my soul did not permit me to gaze upon ; I had no doubt that Thou art, and that Thou art infinite, though not diffused through space, either finite or infinite, and that Thou truly art, because Thou art ever the same, without any difference of parts or movement " (7. 20. 26). Platonic idealism also appears in certain statements in other writings which reflect that abstract conception of Deity which is so characteristic of some Greek theologians : the idea that God is a being transcending the capacity of human faculties, whether of thought or utterance.[2] Of this phase of Augustine's thought, however, we find only faint anticipations in the *Confessions*.

(2) Augustine declares that he found in the Platonic books, not less clearly proclaimed than in the prologue of the fourth Gospel, the doctrine of the Logos : the primordial necessity of a mediator between the Creator and the universe. These also spoke of *the word which was in the beginning with God :* the agent in Creation ; the true life and *light of men*.[3] Mr. Webb has expressed the opinion that Augustine " insisted even to exaggeration upon the Platonic antecedents of the doctrine " of the Logos.[4] This is perhaps true ; but Augustine is at the

[1] See Plot. *Enn.* 5. 3. 14 ; 5. 5. 3. Cp. *de civ.* 8. 5 : " Si noster animus corpus non est, quomodo Deus creator corpus est ? " See also *de civ.* 8. 6, and *de vera relig.* 39. 72 ; 35. 65 ; 36, 77.

[2] See on this point Inge, *Christian Mysticism*, pp. 128–132. Augustine speaks of God as " ineffable " (*de Trin.* 7. 4. 7 ; *de doc.* 1. 5. 5 ; *de civ.* 9. 16) ; as " best adored in silence " (*c. Adim.* 11) ; best acknowledged by the confession of " nescience " (*de ord.* 2. 16. 44 and 18. 47) ; most fitly described by negatives (*enarr. in Ps.* lxxxv. 12), etc.

[3] For a typical passage see *Conf.* 11. 7–9.

[4] Webb, *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, p. 223.

same time careful to specify what he did *not* find in the Platonic writings: namely, any approach to the mystery of the *Word made flesh*, or to the fact of the co-eternal Son being delivered up to death for human sin. (*7.* 9. 13 foll.).

(3) Once more, Augustine eagerly embraced the Platonistic view of the visible universe. He welcomed the idea that all things lower than the Creator Himself have only the semblance of reality. In a sense they are "real" as coming from God; in a sense "unreal" because they are not what He is—the sole unchanging reality. In other words, they are real only in so far as they exist (*vera sunt quantum sunt*).[1] And here he discovered a faint clue to the mystery of evil. All things made by God are essentially good. If evil were a substance it would necessarily be good; but being evil, it is not a substance (*7.* 12. 18): the materialistic or dualistic account of it breaks down. "I found," he writes, "that evil was not a substance, but a perversity of the will, in that it turns aside from Thee, O God, the supreme substance, to desire what is lowest."[2] In adopting the view that physical evil is the corruption or privation of good, and that moral evil is not mere disease or fatality, but rebellion, Augustine has discovered an idealistic solution of his problem, and we may even say that in bringing him to this point Platonism had fulfilled, so far as he was concerned, its providential function. By convincing him of the reality of spiritual substance, it brought him intellectually within range of that catholic belief in Christ as the revelation of God,

[1] *Conf.* 7. 15. 21. In 11. 4. 6 he says, speaking of created things: "Nec ita pulcra sunt nec ita bona sunt, nec ita sunt sicut tu, Conditor rerum; cui comparata nec pulcra sunt, nec bona sunt, nec sunt."

[2] *Conf.* 7. 16. 22; 12. 11. 11. The same statement is made in *de vera rel.* 14. 27 (written about seven years before the *Confessions*). In 40. 76 sin is defined as "defectus voluntarius a summa essentia"; sin, he says, is "not nature, but against nature." Cp. *Enchir.* 11; *de civ. Dei* 14. 11, etc. Observe the relation of this view to the doctrine of Plotinus: "Evil has happened through the contact of the world-soul with matter. Certain souls from a desire to be independent separated themselves from the world-soul and descended into bodies . . . In thus placing the beginnings of sin in a wrongful choice, Plotinus approached the Christian position" (Gibb and Montgomery, *op. cit.* p. xliv.).

which had always, he says, found an echo in his breast and which he now discovered to be the immemorial faith of the Church.

Thus partly through reaction from Manichaeism, now proved to be hollow and delusive, partly through the positive impression made by Platonism, Augustine was drawn to embrace a system of thought which may be described as spiritual idealism; a belief, that is, in the priority and supremacy of spirit in the universe. *Priora enim spiritalia opera tua*, he says, *quam ista corporea, quamvis lucida et caelestia* (3. 6. 10). Spirit, he now discovered, is the final cause and underlying principle of things; God Himself is spirit (3. 7. 12); an omnipresent spiritual power upholds and pervades the world and guides it towards the fulfilment of a spiritual purpose: a purpose which, "once recognized, becomes the necessary and self-evident key to existence; the final category or form of thought under which we are compelled to regard the world."[1] Only one step now parted him from fellowship with the Church, and this was not long delayed. But as we read the moving record of the concluding stages in Augustine's spiritual pilgrimage we are impressed by the way in which it illustrates the saying of our Lord: *If any man willeth to do His will, He shall know of the doctrine.*"[2] Ἐάν τις θέλῃ. What still held Augustine back from complete conversion was not lack of conviction, but an infirmity of purpose which was itself the fruit and penalty of past wilfulness. Platonism could not satisfy the demands of conscience or ease its unrest: it was too predominantly intellectual: too remote from the facts of human life. What Augustine was seeking was a God manifesting Himself as *the Shepherd and Bishop*, the Healer and Guide, of sin-stricken humanity. He needed not knowledge, but power; and this he could discover only in a divine Saviour of the world.

In one of his essays, the late Prof. Carl Hilty makes a remark about Idealism which bears on our present point.[3] "The true

[1] Illingworth, *Divine Immanence*, p. 15. [2] St. John vii. 17.

[3] Prof. Hilty was for some time professor of Constitutional Law in the University of Bonn. The reference is to *Glück*, vol. i., p. 100.

idealism does not imply that men delude themselves about reality, or that they purposely avert their eyes from it and withdraw into a dreamland of their own. But it consists in this, that one obtains a deeper comprehension of the world than that of ordinary men ; and that one overcomes it first and foremost in *oneself*. For we are by the very nature of the case a part of the world and there is no possibility of overcoming it, if we do not in the first instance overcome this particular part—ourselves—by means of steadfast principles and good habits." May we not say that Augustine fell short of becoming a true and consistent " idealist " till he finally surrendered himself to the will of God in his conversion ? In the days of his pride and ignorance he tells us, " I knew not that God was spirit." It is only after his conversion that he cries, " O God, who willest not that any save the pure in heart should know the truth : O God, the Father of Truth, of Wisdom, . . . the true and supreme Life in whom, from whom, through whom, all things live which possess the true and supreme life : Thee only do I love, Thee only do I follow, Thee only do I seek, Thee only am I ready to serve, for Thou only art my rightful Lord. Command, I beseech Thee, what Thou wilt : but open and heal mine ears that I may hear Thy voice ; open and heal mine eyes that I may behold the tokens of Thy good pleasure . . . One thing only do I implore of Thy boundless clemency that Thou wouldest perfectly convert me to Thyself " : *ut me penitus ad Te convertas.*[1]

Augustine in fact made the supreme discovery of his life only when he learned to pray, as he does again and again in the *Confessions* : *Da quod jubes, et jube quod vis.*[2]

[1] *Solil.* 1. 1. 2–6.
[2] *Conf.* 10. 29. 40 (bis). Cp. 10. 31. 45 and 37. 60,

IV

THE INFLUENCE OF ST. AMBROSE ON AUGUSTINE'S MIND AND CHARACTER

NEO-PLATONISM, as we have seen, brought Augustine to the threshold of the Church, but it failed to solve his own personal problem. It satisfied his intellect: it could not appease the pangs of his conscience, nor heal the disorder of his will. What he lacked was the gift of moral power: a new impulse that might touch the springs of action and enable him to embrace the life in God and unto God which Platonism upheld as the ideal. It was at this stage that he was providentially brought into contact with the forceful and majestic personality of St. Ambrose.

Ambrose had been bishop of Milan for nearly ten years at the time (383) when Augustine entered on his professional career in that city. He might with good reason be called a disciple of those illustrious Greek theologians of whom his contemporary, Basil of Caesarea (d. 379), was the most conspicuous. He was a diligent student of their writings. In particular, he owed to them his acquaintance with the allegorical method, which Augustine found so indispensable an aid in the solution of Old Testament difficulties. It was the Oriental mode of chanting the Psalter which Ambrose introduced at Milan,[1] and he himself was the composer

[1] *Conf.* 9. 7. 15. The Eastern practice was that "psalms and hymns should be sung by the people also where previously they had only been recited by individuals singly, and among the Italians by clerks only" (Mabillon *ap.* Gibb and Montgomery, p. 250). The introduction of antiphonal singing is ascribed to Ignatius, bishop of Antioch, by Socrates, *Hist. Eccl.* vi. 8. See Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* 5. 39. 2, with Mr. Bayne's notes ["Eng. Theological Library"].

of many hymns, four of which are mentioned by Augustine.

In the *Confessions*, however, Augustine implies that what mainly impressed him was the personality of Ambrose: "the royal priest," as Harnack calls him, "who first opened Augustine's eyes to the authority and majesty of the Church." "Only a Roman bishop," he adds, "even if he did not occupy the Roman chair, could teach him this; and perhaps the great work *de civitate Dei* would never have been written had it not been for the way in which this majesty had been impressed on Augustine by Ambrose."[1] But Ambrose did more than this for the young and ambitious professor of rhetoric. Augustine rightly refers to him as "the blessed Ambrose," and describes him in a later work as that "excellent steward of God whom I venerate as a father; for he it was who begat me in Christ Jesus through the Gospel, and by his ministry I received the washing of regeneration."[2] As we have seen, Augustine was at first attracted only as an intelligent and observant critic by the literary style of the great bishop's preaching; but he gradually came to take an interest in the subject-matter of his discourses, and to recognize the convincing force of his argument. Listening to Ambrose he had at first said, "How eloquent!"; later on he said, "How true!" And in thus yielding himself up to the sway of a powerful personality he may have discovered that the secret of moral victory and progress lies after all in self-surrender to a personal influence. In any case, the result of constant attendance on Ambrose was the growth in his mind of a conviction that in the catholic Church, if anywhere, was to be found the truth which he had so long sought in vain. He gradually learned that submission to authority is an indispensable condition of progress in divine knowledge, and in this frame of mind he decided to become a catechumen (5. 14. 25).

When we consider the peculiar type of Christian piety which

[1] *H.D.* 5. 48. Cp. *Conf.* 5. 13. 23 and 6. 1. 1.

[2] *c. Julian.* 1. 4. 10. In *Soliloquia* 2. 14. 26 he says: "Unum doleo quod vel erga se [Ambrose] vel erga sapientiam studium nostrum non ei ut volumus valemus aperire."

is characteristic of Augustine, and which he may be said to have transmitted as an ideal to the Western Church we recognize how great is the debt which he owed to the teaching and influence of Ambrose. In Augustine himself two things seem to be combined: a free personal self-surrender to God, together with a devout submission to the Church as the home of those divine gifts of grace which quicken and maintain the union of the soul with God; thus, as Harnack points out, we see him "compressing what was fullest of life and freest, the possession of God, into, as it were, an objective property, which was transferred to an institution, the Church."[1] The relation of these two elements in religion, the mystical and the institutional, will be discussed later. Meanwhile it may be said with confidence that Augustine owed to the preaching and example of Ambrose a clearer apprehension of the doctrine of the Church: the Church regarded—

(1) As the divinely authorized guardian and interpreter of Scripture.

(2) As the authoritative witness to the truth of the Incarnation.

(3) As the sphere of grace, healing and enabling the will.

(4) As the *domus disciplinae*: the school of evangelical perfection.

We will touch briefly upon each of these points.

1. The experience of Augustine himself sufficiently shows how serious a stumblingblock the Old Testament presented to those who approached Christianity from a philosophic or educated standpoint.

The difficulty was that, while the Old Testament held an authoritative position in the practical system of the Church; while it "filled a large place as a source and an instrument of its teaching,"[2] its apparent anthropomorphism, its ascrip-

[1] *H.D.* 5. 66.

[2] See Brightman in *The Early History of the Church and the Ministry* (1918), Essay vi. p. 338. Mr. Brightman refers in illustration to Origen's exposition of the Creed in *de Princ.* 1 praef. 4, and to Cyprian's *Testimonia.* Cp. also the use of the O.T. in the writings of Irenaeus and Justin Martyr.

tion to the divine Being of human passions, motives and methods of action that seemed derogatory to His majesty; the crude and defective morality of the ancient saints; the generally low level of their social customs and religious rites—all these phenomena of Hebrew religion, which, when regarded from an evolutionary standpoint,[1] are so easily explicable, seemed to religious inquirers of the first five Christian centuries wholly irreconcilable with the theology and ethics of the Gospel of Christ, yet in some way inextricably bound up with their acceptance. Marcion, we know, rejected entirely the authority of the Old Testament; to him, as to the Manichaeans after him, the contrast between the Old and New Testament was only part of a larger antithesis, viz. that between the God of Salvation and the God of Creation: between Spirit and Matter: between Light and Darkness. Influential Christian thinkers, on the other hand, were able to discern in the Old Testament the principle of divine self-accommodation to the needs and capacities of human nature in different stages of its development. They perceived that revelation and morality were alike progressive: that the one true religion had adapted itself to varying conditions in the history of mankind. As Irenaeus, himself a pioneer in this line of thought, expresses it: *Una salus et unus Deus: quae autem formant hominem praecepta multa, et non pauci gradus qui ducunt hominem ad Deum.*[2]

[1] Bigg, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 114: "Evolution is a purely Christian idea. To the Greek, unity implied fixity; to the Christian it involved the idea of a living and growing whole. It was thus that the Church answered the Gnostics who regarded the Old Testament as false. It was thus that Athanasius explained the Incarnation." See *de util. cred.* 2. 4. The difficulties of the Old Testament are a stumblingblock to minds ignorant and self-neglectful (quae maxima turba est), because "populariter accusai possunt, defendi autem populariter, propter mysteria quae his rcontinentur, non a multis admodum possunt."

[2] *c. Haer.* 4. 9. 3. See *Conf.* 3. 7. 13 and 14; and cp. the remark in *de vera rel.* 17. 34. "Ut enim ars medicinae, cum eadem maneat, neque ullo pacto ipsa mutetur, mutat tamen praecepta languentibus, quia mutabilis est nostra valetudo: ita divina providentia cum sit omnino incommutabilis, mutabili tamen creaturae varie subvenit," etc.

This principle, however, of God's providential dealing with mankind was not self-evident to simple and uninstructed Christians. To such the allegorical method of exegesis brought welcome relief. It had long been familiar to educated Pagans, who used it freely to explain the ascription (by Homer and other poets) of immoral or grotesque actions to the gods. The Stoics found it serviceable in their attempts to reconcile the popular religion with philosophy. It was adopted also by Jewish writers like Aristobulus and Philo in the exposition of the Old Testament : indeed, not only their method of exegesis, but even some particular interpretations seem to have become traditional in the Christian Church. Those who were concerned with defending Christianity found this mode of treating ancient literature an indispensable aid : while to the perplexed enquirer it brought welcome relief. Thus Origen (to mention one instance only) found in the hypothesis of a spiritual sense underlying the letter of Scripture, a vindication of the Old Testament parallel to that which the Greek mythology had received at the hands of Stoic teachers like Cornutus.[1] Probably, indeed, as Dr. Hatch suggests, the use of this method "largely helped to prevent the Old Testament from being discarded." It is true that in some quarters its value was questioned, and at Antioch towards the close of the fourth century it was practically set aside in favour of *literalism* in exegesis : but it survived in virtue of the element of truth which it contained, and of the service which it undoubtedly rendered to faith.

I have endeavoured elsewhere to vindicate and explain the existence of the allegorical or mystical sense in Scripture.[2] I will only say here that it is suggested by the practice of the New Testament writers themselves (especially St. Paul and the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews). Augustine even claims that it may be illustrated from the teaching of Our Lord Himself.[3] It finds justification in the organic connexion

[1] See Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, no. iii : pp. 77 foll. ; Newman, *The Arians of the Fourth Century*, ch. 1 § 3.

[2] In the *Bampton Lectures* for 1879 : pp. 401 foll.

[3] *de util. cred.* 3. 8 : referring to St. Matt. xii. 39, 40.

which exists between the religion of the New Testament and that of the Jews. It assumes that where a living Providence is at work in history, the earlier stages of religion may be expected to foreshadow and prepare the way for later developments. Indeed, this seems to be plainly implied in the statement of Hebrews ix. 8 that in certain Jewish ordinances the Holy Spirit Himself pre-signified truths of religion which were at a later time to be more fully disclosed. On this subject, however, there is no need to enlarge. The fact that concerns us is that the allegorical method, whatever be its justification and its value, was borrowed from the East, and that Ambrose was largely responsible for its introduction into Italy. Augustine mentions in the *Confessions* how profoundly he was impressed by Ambrose's expositions of Scripture. "I had supposed," he says, "that for the catholic Faith no sort of case could be made out against Manichaean objections. I now understood that it could be maintained with self-respect, especially when I heard one difficulty after another explained by way of allegory. For hitherto, while I read those Scriptures in the letter, I was slain in the spirit" (5. 14. 24). He thus discovered a way of escape from anthropomorphic ideas of God. "I rejoiced, O God, to learn that Thy Church . . . did not believe childish absurdities: did not in her sound doctrine teach that Thou, the Creator of all, art imprisoned in space or bounded by the configuration of human limbs (6. 4. 5)."[1] It is plain that a great stumblingblock to faith was removed from his path: and this relief he owed to Ambrose, who was accustomed to quote as a rule of exegesis (*regula*, 6. 4. 6) the text (2 Cor. iii. 6) *the letter killeth but the spirit giveth life:* and who was the author of the suggestive maxim, Platonistic in tone, scriptural in content: *Umbra in lege, imago in Evangelio, veritas in caelo.*[2]

No doubt, Allegorism has been greatly abused both in ancient and in more recent times. Augustine himself supplies us with

[1] Cp. *de util. cred.* 18. 36. "Quid ergo didici? Quid putas, nisi cum ista reprehenduntur, disciplinam Catholicam non reprehendi."

[2] Ambrose, *in Psalm.* xxxviii. 25.

many examples of fantastic and extravagant exegesis; some of these may be found in the thirteenth book of the *Confessions*. But as Dr. Hatch himself admits, "the method is based upon an element in human nature which is not likely to pass away. Whatever be its value in relation to the literature of the past, it is at least the expression in relation to the present, that our lives are hedged round by the unknown, that there is a haze about both our birth and our departure, and that even the meaner facts of life are linked to infinity."[1] For this reason it has survived the vagaries of "private interpretation" which have so often brought it into discredit. The fact that it is recognized in Scripture should suffice to show that it rests on a basis of reason and fact.

2. More important than his view of the Old Testament is the question of Augustine's Christology. For him conversion and submission to the authority of the Church was tantamount to a closer and deeper knowledge of Him whose name he had held in reverence from his childhood, and had never altogether forgotten or wilfully blasphemed.

Now the most marked characteristic of Augustine is his mysticism: his vivid consciousness of the personal relation of his soul to God. To him God Himself is all in all: the sole Giver of grace, Healer of sin, and Author of peace and blessedness. In one passage he even speaks of God—not Christ—as the bridegroom of the soul: "O God, the light of my heart, the bread of the mouth of my inmost spirit, the spouse of my mind and of my inmost thought; I loved Thee not; I was unfaithful to Thee."[2] Even his idea of grace as a divine gift making faith, love and obedience possible, seems to be more

[1] *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 83, 84. Mr. Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 209, says: "The historic method is modern and is sounder, but the allegoric method, for all its immediate unsoundness, really enabled an earlier generation to reach, as conveniently for its particular mental habits, the same fundamentally sound conclusion, that the real value of the Old Testament is after all its spiritual content, and that all else is in the long run immaterial."

[2] *Conf.* 1. 13. 21: "Maritans mentem meam et sinum cogitationis meae." Cp. Gibb and Montgomery, p. xv.: "It is to the Father, not

or less independent of the historic Christ. Not that he overlooks the vital connexion of forgiveness with the sacrifice of the Cross; but to him grace meant much more than forgiveness. It meant healing medicine perpetually administered: moral power continuously imparted. There is therefore a superficial element of truth in the remark of Prof. Harnack that at least in the earlier stages of his life as a catholic believer, Augustine fails "to do justice to Christ's significance as the mirror of God's fatherly heart and as the eternal Mediator."[1]

But unquestionably Ambrose's teaching led him on to a truer apprehension of Christ's person and work than he held before his conversion. He tells us that he had formerly thought of Christ as a man of supreme wisdom to whom none other could be compared; a human teacher of unique authority. He also mentions the fact that his friend Alypius erroneously imagined that the Apollinarian view of our Lord's person was orthodox: "and for myself," he adds, "I must confess that it was not till later that I learned how the catholic faith differs from the Photinian error in its interpretation of the phrase *The Word was made flesh.*"[2]

Ambrose, like Hilary, has been described not without reason as a "Grecizing" theologian, and in his treatment of the doctrine of the Incarnation, we find him using terminology to which the Cappadocian theologians had given currency. Like other Westerns, however, he was much less interested in the speculative problems connected with the person of Christ, than in anthropology and in practical matters of *cultus* and organization. We must bear in mind that he was the son of a Roman prefect and had been a lawyer, a magistrate and a provincial governor before he became bishop of Milan. Thus Ambrose

to the Son, that Augustine addresses his prayer. In this respect his practice differs widely from the later Latin mystics such as Bernard and à Kempis."

[1] Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 87.

[2] *Conf.* 7. 19. 25. As to the view of Photinus bp. of Sirmium *c.* 340 (Christ a man supernaturally born, indwelt by the Logos and exalted to divine dignity) see *The doctrine of the Incarnation*, pp. 329–331. The view of Photinus implied a rejection of Christ's pre-existence, and consequently of His Deity.

was by habit and temperament a tenacious guardian of the Church's doctrinal tradition.[1] Dorner goes so far as to assert that neither Ambrose nor Augustine "developed any productiveness worthy of mention in connexion with the dogma of the Incarnation."[2] Nevertheless it is safe to say that Augustine derived from Ambrose a more explicit and accurate knowledge of the current doctrine of the Church than had hitherto been within his reach, though his interest in Christology at this stage of his career was certainly religious rather than intellectual. Moreover, as a neophyte he so idealized the Church that his tendency was in some measure to transfer the attributes of Christ to the catholic Society.[3] The figure of the one Mediator receded from view in proportion as he emphasized the thought of the mediatorial kingdom and system.

Consequently the passages in the *Confessions* which refer to the Redeemer's person and work are comparatively few. Only in one passage (9. 1. 1) does he directly invoke our Lord: and there is only one brief statement of the doctrine of Christ's mediatorship, namely, in the closing chapter of the tenth book. In other passages which speak directly of our Lord we may perhaps distinguish three leading ideas.

i. Augustine dwells repeatedly on the moral significance of Christ's great humility: that humility by which He healed and subdued the pride of man. Twice he alludes to the invitation *Learn of me: for I am meek and lowly in heart.* It was this humility of which he discovered no note in the books of the Platonists. "They think it scorn," he says, "to learn of Him because He is meek and lowly in heart." He confesses that in his unregenerate days he had reverenced Christ as a being of incomparable wisdom, but not as the very embodiment of the Truth (*persona veritatis*, 7. 19. 25). "I did not humbly hold

[1] See Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, 77; Bertrand, *St. Augustin*, p. 200. Speaking of Ambrose he says "Baptisé, ordonné prêtre et consacré coup sur coup, il ne résigna ses fonctions civiles qu'en apparence: du haut de sa chaire episcopale, il représentait toujours la plus haute autorité du pays."

[2] *Person of Christ*, div. 2. 1. 77.

[3] Cp. Fairbairn p. 108.

the humble Lord Jesus, nor did I know what His weakness was intended to teach us. For Thy Word, the eternal truth, exalted far above the higher parts of Thy creation, lifteth up His subjects towards Himself; but in the lower parts hath He built for Himself a humble dwelling of our clay, that so He might pull down from themselves, and win over to Himself, those whom He would subject to His sway; abasing their pride and heightening their love, that they might not stray further afield in self-confidence, but might rather be made weak, beholding before their feet the Godhead made weak" (7. 18. 24). In fact the main purpose of the Incarnation, Augustine thinks, was to make known to men the "way of humility" (7. 9. 14), in which connexion the passage Phil. ii. 5–11 is constantly in his thoughts. It was in order to encourage him to follow the humility of Christ that Simplicianus pressed upon him the shining example of Victorinus (8. 2. 3).

ii. Again, Augustine in the *Confessions* dwells much on the thought that Christ is the *Way* to the Father: *Via Ipse Salvator* (8. 1. 1). He could find (he says) no means of obtaining strength to rise to the enjoyment of God till he embraced Him Who calls to man, proclaiming Himself as *the Way, the Truth, the Life* (7. 18. 24 and 20. 26). There is a fine passage in the fourth book the tone of which may remind us of the beautiful *Epistle to Diognetus*. It dwells on the gentleness of the divine method in the restoration of man:

"Our Life Himself came down to earth and bore our death and slew it by virtue of the abundance of His life. With a voice of thunder He cried to us to return to Him . . . He tarried not but ran, crying aloud by His words, by His deeds, by His death, by His life, by His descent, by His ascent—crying to us aloud to return to Him. And He departed from our eyes that we might return to our own hearts and find Him there.[1] Made like unto us in all things Christ was, as man,

[1] *Conf.* 4. 12. 9. Cp. *de vera rel.* 16. 31: "Nihil egit vi sed omnia suadendo et monendo" (alluded to in *Retract.* 1. 13. 6). See also a passage in *c. Epist. Fund.* 41, which speaks of Christ as "verus Magister," "ipsa incorruptibilis Veritas," "solus Magister interior."

the recipient of grace : and as by His example He has ennobled and robbed of their terrors the things at which men shudder, so He emptied of worth the things which they are so prone to desire. Sin, he elsewhere says, consists in eagerly seeking those things which He contemned, or in evading those things which He endured. His whole earthly life was thus a *disciplina morum :* a schooling in character to mankind.[1] In Him, as the teacher and pattern of the Godward life, is revealed the way to the Father : what the Platonists could not discover was manifested and brought within man's reach by Christ (*7. 21. 27*).

Thus Augustine's case illustrates " the general truth—that the doctrine of the Incarnation makes its essential appeal to our moral sense." [2] It cannot be profitably studied purely from the intellectual standpoint. Discussion void of moral interest is either sterile or misleading.

iii. Once again : Augustine now and then speaks of Christ as an *indwelling Spirit*, whose presence is a law of living power in the converted soul. In a passionate apostrophe to Christ he says, " O Christ Jesus, my helper and redeemer ! How sweet did it suddenly become to me to cast away the sweets of folly. . . . For thou didst cast them from me, O true and sovereign sweetness, and didst Thyself enter in in their stead . . . So was my mind free from the fretting anxieties of ambition or gain and from prurient desires ; and I prattled (*garriebam*) like a child to Thee my light, my riches, my salvation, my Lord God " (*9. 1. 1*). This sentence may be compared with a passage in Ambrose's commentary on the Psalms : " Let Christ enter thy soul ; let Jesus dwell in your minds . . . What advantage is it to me, conscious of such heinous sins, if the Lord comes, unless He comes into my soul, returns into my mind ; unless Christ lives in me ? "[3]

[1] *de catech. rud.* 22. 40 ; *de vera rel.* 16, 31. 32 ; *de util.* 15. 33 ; *de civ.* 10. 29.

[2] *The Meaning of the Creed*, p. 43.

[3] *in Psalm.* cxix. exp. 4. 26. See Harnack *H.D.* 5. 50, who says this passage illustrates the fact that " the religious individualism which shines so clearly in Augustine already does so faintly in Ambrose."

Speaking broadly then, it is evident that Augustine, consistently with his strong mystical tendency, lays no special stress on the ecclesiastical doctrine of Christ's person, though it is implied as the background of his mysticism. For him the significance of the Incarnation lies in the fact that it is a divine object-lesson, bringing home to the heart of humanity, in a way that cannot be misunderstood, its need of unbroken and entire dependence on God Himself as the only giver of grace and salvation: in other words the supreme significance of humility as the gate of entrance to the kingdom. It has been remarked with justice that Augustine is inclined to represent the Incarnation as itself "the redemptive act"—a view which links him to some of the great Greek theologians like Athanasius. At any rate he lays comparatively little stress on the atoning element in Christ's death, and seems on the whole to fall back on earlier representations of its meaning and issues.[1] In the *Enchiridion*, which contains a much later and more mature exposition of the faith, we find a more explicit treatment of catholic Christology[2]; but even here the dominant thought seems to be that the primary purpose of the divine dispensation was the healing of human pride through the humility of God: the presentation to human wilfulness of a pattern of sinless obedience. This was, in fact, a favourite topic with Augustine throughout his career as a Christian. We may recall the celebrated passage in which he gathers up the fruit of his spiritual experience. "The way to the attainment of truth is none other than He Who, as God, perceived the weakness of our steps; and that road is first humility; second humility; third humility."[3] The revelation of God,

[1] Cp. Gibb and Montgomery, notes on pp. 96 and 199; *Doctrine of the Incarnation*, pp. 506, 507.

[2] *Enchir.* 108.

[3] *Ep.* 118. 22. Cp. *de civ.* 10. 29; *Conf.* 1. 11. 17. Harnack, *H.D.*, 5. 237 remarks: "Christ's significance as redeemer is quite as strongly expressed for Augustine in this humility in splendour, and in His example of a Christian life, as in His death . . . The Incarnation wholly recedes, or is set in a light entirely unfamiliar to the Greeks. Thus the second article [of the Creed] has been completely changed."

of His requirement and of His grace, appeals to the sense of *need*. Poverty of spirit is the essential condition of all progress in the Christian life.

Before leaving this point we may fittingly remind ourselves of that verse from St. Paul's Epistles which Augustine accepted as a decisive personal call to conversion: *Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ*, etc. True, there is very little explicit "Christology" in the *Confessions*, but we must recollect that his conversion meant for Augustine the entrance upon a new relation to our Lord. It meant the final subordination of the old nature to the new: a personal submission both of intellect and will to the Truth incarnate. It implied a determination to yield up a nature disordered, weakened and blinded by sin to be renewed, enlightened, strengthened by the sanctifying energy of a divine nature: by the operation of God Himself manifesting as man and in man the riches of His mercy and power. Augustine, like St. Paul, was a monument of the victorious grace of Christ.[1]

We may also consider what is involved in the fact that St. Paul, not any of the four evangelists, was his guide at the very crisis of his life. The Pauline Christology lies behind the Synoptic presentation of Our Lord: *We preach Christ Jesus as Lord: Lord over all: Lord of glory*[2]: one with the Father Whom He reveals: exercising a divine sovereignty which He has merited by His life of creaturely service and obedience: the one mediator of the divine purpose of salvation. Augustine submitted himself to the glorified Christ of the Church; he accepted that form of the Christian confession, that type of doctrine, which speaking historically was already in possession of the field when the Gospels were written; which lies behind their record, and which converted the world. In other words, he implicitly assigns to the person of our Lord that supreme significance which it had for St. Paul, nay, for the whole

[1] Cp. 1 Tim. i. 14, and see *Cambridge Theological Essays*, p. 499.
[2] 2 Cor. iv. 5; Rom. x. 12; 1 Cor. ii. 8. Cp. Col. ii. 6. On the conception of Christ's Lordship in St. Paul see *The Doctrine of the Incarnation*, pp. 97 foll.

apostolic Church. Accordingly it is not too much to say that the Christology of the *Confessions* is of the distinctively Pauline type: it is embodied in such antithetic phrases as "*Dominum Jesum .. . humilem*"; "*infirma Divinitas*": "*in quantum homo, in tantum mediator; in quantum Verbum non medius, quia aequalis Deo et Deus apud Deum.*"[1] As St. Paul exclaims *He loved me and gave Himself for me*"; so Augustine says "He, Thine Only One, in Whom are hid all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge, redeemed me by His blood."

3. There is another point in which Augustine's idea of the Church seems to be moulded by the influence of Ambrose; he conceived of the Church mainly as the covenanted sphere of grace: in it the power of God is manifested, and freely imparted to man, for the enabling of the will and the healing of sin.

We must bear in mind that the *Confessions* only represent the mind of Augustine as it was during the earlier stages of his Christian career. They exhibit tendencies of religious thought which only at a later time became "crystallized," as Bishop Robertson says, "into an unalterable theological conviction." To these tendencies, moreover, not merely the preaching of Ambrose but the study of St. Paul's Epistles, gave a powerful impetus. Augustine's own experience led him to a consciousness of two supreme factors in his soul's history—personal sin and divine grace; and it is with these two mysteries that in the *Confessions* he is mainly pre-occupied, for "The doctrine of grace follows naturally on the story unfolded in the *Confessions.*"[2]

We gather that these two topics figured prominently in the teaching of Ambrose, who was himself a diligent student of St. Paul. Ambrose was accustomed to insist strongly upon the radical evil of sin; he pointed to its origin in the abuse of free-will, in creaturely self-assertion or "pride of soul"; and he taught that it propagated itself in the human race as the consequence of its descent from Adam. This was the view which became a cardinal point in *Augustine's* anthropology,

[1] *Conf.* 7. 18. 24; 10. 43. 68 and 70.

[2] Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, p. 189; Glover, *op. cit.*, p. 214 note.

and those who care to do so can find many passages in the writings of Ambrose which anticipate Augustinian statements.[1]

The same remark holds good of the doctrine of grace. The antithesis of "nature and grace"—so familiar to us in the writings of Augustine—may be traced back through Ambrose to Tertullian.[2] Ambrose himself accentuates the omnipotence of grace not less emphatically than his great disciple. He insists that the first movement of the will towards good, and its continued steadfastness, is of God. Indeed, taking Ambrose and Augustine together, we may say that they strikingly illustrate the way in which a revival of Paulinism has frequently inaugurated a new departure in religious thought. For the conceptions of sin and redemption, grace and freedom, to which these Western teachers give systematic form and wider currency are manifestly based on the express teaching of St. Paul.[3]

In the *Confessions* we meet with Augustine's doctrine of sin and grace in its elementary and least technical form. He has escaped from the Manichaean view that sin is a quasi-physical power—a kind of necessity of nature or fate, for which man is ultimately non-responsible. He has learned man's true position as a child of God—"servant of Providence, not slave of Fate."[4] He has reached the conviction that sin is essentially a defect—in his own case a guilty weakness—of will. Sin in the last resort is rebellion: aversion or declension from God. "Herein," he says, "I sinned, that not in God Himself but in His creatures—in myself and in others—I sought for pleasure, exaltation (*sublimitates*), reality: and so I rushed headlong into trouble, shame, and error."[5] His passionate desire is that God may rescue him from the dissipation of spirit by

[1] See Harnack, *H.D.* 5. pp. 49 foll.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 51 note 2.

[3] On Pauline revivals (or reactions) see Bigg, *Christian Platonists of Alexandria*, pp. 53, 283 foll.; *Neo-Platonism*, pp. 156, 157. To the same effect Harnack, *H.D.*, 1. 136.

[4] Wordsworth, *Sonnets dedicated to Liberty and Order*, no. 4.

[5] For a clear statement on the meaning of sin see *de vera rel.* 14. 2 (written *c.* 390); and *Conf.* 1. 20. 31; 2. 1. 1; 2. 5. 10; 3. 8. 16; 7. 3. 5.

which he finds himself distracted : from the state in which, he says, *ab uno Te aversus in multa evanui.* Sin is committed " when by inordinate inclination towards the lowest kind of goods, the higher and better are forsaken : even Thyself, O Lord, Thy truth, Thy law." Accordingly, since the entire sum and substance of good is to be found in God alone. " The soul is like an unfaithful spouse when it turns away from Him and seeks apart from Him what it cannot find pure and unadulterated till it returns to Him " (2. 6. 14).[1] And in regard to the penalty of sin Augustine's own profound saying goes to the root of the matter. " Thou hast commanded, and so it is, that every inordinate affection is its own punishment " (1. 12. 19).

So much for sin. What then is Augustine's idea of grace ? In the *Confessions,* as in St. Paul's Epistle to the Ephesians (i. 7), grace is primarily recognized as *forgiveness* overcoming sin : " I ascribe it to Thy grace and to Thy mercy that Thou hast dissolved my sins like the ice." It is also the mercy that *restrains from sin :* " To Thy grace it is owing that some evil I left undone . . . And I give thanks that all is forgiven me—both the evil that I wrought of my own accord and the evil which through Thy guidance I wrought not " (2. 7. 15). Finally grace is " the initiating principle of all good in us : " *the gift of power* to overcome sin and to perform God's will. *Da quod jubes et jube quod vis* is a prayer for grace which Augustine thrice repeats.[2] But it is only in a later treatise—the *de spiritu et littera*—that he expressly identifies grace with the operation in man of the Holy Spirit : the Spirit of that love, which is *the fufillling of the law* and *the end of the commandment.*[3]

[1] Cp. *de lib. arb.* 2. 20. 54 : " Omne bonum ex Deo : nulla ergo natura est quae non sit ex Deo. Motus ergo ille eversionis quod fatemur esse peccatum, quoniam defectivus motus est, omnis autem defectus ex nihilo est, vide quo pertineat et ad Deum non pertinere ne dubites. Qui tamen defectus quoniam est voluntarius, in nostra est posita voluntate."

[2] *Conf.* 10. 29. 40 ; and 31. 45 ; 37. 60. On Pelagius' horror at hearing this expression quoted see *de dono persev.* 20. 53. " From this saying the Pelagian controversy took its rise " (G. and M., p. 303).

[3] *de spiritu et litt.,* 36 (written towards the close of 412).

Augustine's doctrine of grace, as we know, had a subsequent history with which we are not here concerned.

In studying the later development of his thought we must not overlook the influence of Victorinus—that "Augustinian before Augustine" as he has been called—whom the writer of the *Confessions* made to a certain extent his model at the most critical turning-point of his career. Certainly the theology of Victorinus was Pauline and anti-Pelagian in tendency.[1] Like Augustine, he was led to faith by earnest study of the New Testament (8. 2. 4); moreover, he exemplified in his own case the ease with which Neo-Platonic speculation could be combined with catholic beliefs. In the *Confessions*, however, Augustine is exclusively occupied with his own spiritual experience which, as Bishop Robertson points out, the verse Romans ix. 16 fitted "with startling exactness": *It is not of him that willeth nor of him that runneth but of God that hath mercy.*[2] He is writing as a disciple of St. Paul, glorifying the work of grace. It was grace alone which had already liberated, and would doubtless in time perfectly heal, his will. We do not find in the *Confessions* any formal distinction between grace "prevenient" and "co-operating," but it is implied and only awaits explicit statement. The fact is that Augustine's experience as priest and bishop, a renewed study of St. Paul, and the review of his own life when writing the *Confessions*, only confirmed him in the conviction—partly Pauline, partly Neo-Platonic—that all good of every kind, including the gift of faith, comes from God, and that man only finds true liberty of spirit in unreserved dependence on God.[3]

I need not, however, pursue further the history of Augus-

[1] See his works in Migne, *P.L.* 8. 999 foll. Bp. Gore's art. "Victorinus Afer" in the *Dict. of Chr. Biog.* should be consulted. It may be noted that Victorinus anticipates Augustine in his doctrine both of predestination and of justification by faith. Cp. Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 35 note.

[2] *Regnum Dei*, p. 189.

[3] Cp. *Conf.* 13. 1. 1: "Praevenisti omnia bona merita mea, ut retribueres manibus tuis quibus me fecisti." See also 13. 14. 15 and *epist.* 194 *ad Sixtum*, 19.

tine's doctrine of grace, nor point out the inconsistencies into which, under the stress of the controversy with Pelagius, he was betrayed.

Dr. Bright suggests (and it is a solemn thought) that "his early wanderings from the path were the original source of what is unsatisfactory as well as of what is admirable in his polemic." In the retrospect of his career previous to his conversion "the divine side of the work of salvation became to his gaze altogether predominant."[1] Let me only say that his later teaching as to merit and free-will, the total depravity of man's nature, the irresistibility of grace, the mysteries of divine foreknowledge, election and predestination, seem to be logical consequences of his one-sided insistence upon the omnipotence of God and the absolute necessity of grace. By degrees he even came to believe that there was a relative good in the existence of evil. Good and evil, taken together, enhanced the divine glory to a greater degree than good alone, since the existence of evil occasioned the display of God's sovereign power in punishing sin and overruling evil. God is glorified, he held, in the perfect ordering (*ordinatio*) of all His works.[2]

Ultimately the most perplexing problems raised in the Pelagian controversy were shelved, and the canons of the second Council of Orange (529) embody what is virtually a mediating position. It must suffice, however, to have indicated the steadfast conviction—the fruit of Augustine's self-scrutiny and self-surrender—which pervades the *Confessions* and became the very mainspring of his spiritual life: the conviction that the divine mercy gives what it commands and enables man to fulfil what it requires; that the gift of God is manifested in Jesus Christ and mediated through Him, and that it includes all that human nature needs for its perfection: deliverance from sin, confidence in God, the spirit of love making all things possible and all things perfect. We can only regret that Augustine was induced to go beyond this elemental simplicity of view.

4. One more point remains for consideration. It is most

[1] *Lessons from the Lives of three great Fathers*, pp. 169, 170.
[2] *Epist.* 140 *ad Honoratum*, 4.

probable that Augustine derived from Ambrose the conception of the Church as a *domus disciplinae*—a school of holy living: its institutions, its organization, its traditions having as their one aim the salvation of men and the building up of the Christian character. In the *Confessions* there is little that bears immediately upon this topic. But if we take into account the ardour with which Ambrose was accustomed in his preaching to extol virginity and the religious life, and the fact that he even wrote treatises in its honour—we shall understand Augustine's zeal, both as a Christian neophyte and subsequently as a bishop, for the monastic life. He deliberately chose it for himself and was never weary of commending it as the ideal state to others.

What, we may ask, was the real significance of that widespread movement towards Monachism which, beginning in Egypt and the East, eventually took firm and lasting root, and after a bitter conflict of opinion was transplanted to the West?[1] Doubtless the motives which induced men to embrace the monastic life were very various and were not always purely religious. But it may be said, speaking broadly, that the main impulse which led devout men in this direction was the desire of solitude: of satisfying in communion with God the yearnings of the individual soul. The catholic Church stood for a great ideal: it sought in an organized corporate life to realize itself as a divine kingdom upon earth: it stood for the subordination of individuality to the service of a world-wide society; it aimed before all things at unity of order and discipline; it bore steadfast witness to the essentially social character of Christian morality. It sought to leaven the whole fabric of civilization by its regenerating influence, and felt itself impelled to claim all that was good and wholesome in contemporary thought and activity as its own. The Church, in a word, represented the kingdom, "the imperial life," into which the soul passes in making the venture of faith and receiving baptism into the Threefold Name.[2] Monasticism on the other

[1] Cp. Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 27 foll; 234 f.; also his lecture *Das Mönchthum, seine Ideale und seine Geschichte* (Giessen, 1886), p. 25.

[2] Cp. H. S. Holland, *God's City*, p. 23.

hand seems to have found its mainspring and root not so much in desire for the imitation of Christ as in an inarticulate consciousness of the dignity and value of individuality. It was as an assertion of the principle that religion implies a direct personal relationship to God and that the kingdom of God realizes itself in individual souls before it finds outward expression in a visible organization. The three vows of poverty, celibacy and obedience, it has been justly said, served "as the mould in which the spirit of the individual man might be re-cast when seeking possibilities of escape from the tyranny of conventional religion, or of a world which had grown indifferent to spiritual realities."[1] In brief, monachism seemed to be the natural avenue of escape from an environment which was felt to be perilous to personal salvation. It was a form of life which enabled fervent souls to realize the true worth of manhood; to secure inward liberty and Christlike independence; to escape from the cares of the world, the pressure of circumstance, the manifold forms of temptation which hindered them in their pursuit of the one thing needful.[2]

Monachism was obviously a movement of vast significance, and it was destined to bear unexpected fruit, so far as Western Christendom was concerned, in philosophy, in ethics, in theology, and even in politics. It was one among the many causes which tended to produce a profounder view of human personality. On the other hand, the principle that the Christian life is realized in fellowship is attested by the fact that every monastery was *ecclesiola in ecclesia:* a fraternal society knit together by community of faith, purpose and discipline. Even in the act of escaping from the shackles of a secularized religion,

[1] A.V.G. Allen, *Christian Institutions* (T. & T. Clark), p. 158. Cp. Foakes-Jackson in *Camb. Theol. Essays*, p. 497: "Christian Monasticism, though it did not receive its primary impulse from the gospel, owed many of its features to the Person of Christ. It was the desire to imitate this purity of life that in the fourth century, drove men and women to take refuge in the desert from the secularized Christianity of the cities of the Empire." See also Harnack, *Das Mönchthum*, pp. 19 and 23, Glover, *op. cit.* 18, and Newman, *Historical Sketches*, 2. 150.

[2] *Conf.* 8. 2. 2: "Mihi autem displicebat quod agebam in saeculo," etc.

the soul felt its need of fellowship, its dependence upon a social impulse, a supporting environment.

Looking at monachism only from this standpoint we can readily understand the fascination it had for the writer of the *Confessions*. He tells us how profoundly it interested him, how powerfully he was stirred by what he read of Antony and the Egyptian solitaries. We remember how, in their longing to escape from the trammels of a worldly career, he and his friends looked not so much towards the Church as an institution as towards a coenobitic life: *detestantes turbulentas humanae vitae molestias* (6. 14. 24); and how, aafer his conversion, he was tempted under the pressure of conscious weakness and sinfulness to seek refuge in solitude.[1] He felt indeed the full pressure of those evils which had led Plotinus to exclaim, "Let us fly hence to our dear fatherland."[2] The fabric of thought and habit which for ages had sheltered mankind was visibly crumbling around him. The majestic civilization of which Rome was the focus and mainspring was verging towards utter collapse. Vast and immensely far-reaching changes were in progress, impelling men to seek salvation in retirement from the world, and we can easily understand Augustine's strong desire after his ordination for the comparative seclusion of a community life. "Thus," he says, in one of his sermons, "I separated myself from those who love the world . . . and I began to gather round me companions; brethren having the same holy intentions, possessing nothing as I possessed nothing . . . so that we might all live in common, God Himself being to us a large and bounteous heritage."[3] Here Augustine reveals his mind. To him religion was before everything else a bond of sacred fellowship between the soul and God. To him the true saint

[1] *Conf.* 10. 43. 70. "Meditatus fueram fugam in solitudinem." Cp. *Serm.* 339. 4 where he tells us he was "terrified by the Gospel" (referring to the parable of the man with one talent) into undertaking the active toils of pastoral work.

[2] The ascetic ideal was proclaimed by Neo-Platonists as well as by Christians. Glover, p. 18.

[3] *Serm.* 335 *de diversis*, 1. 2.

was the ascetic, and asceticism was the way of Christian perfection, the culmination, as it seemed, of love.[1]

Indeed, the paradox of Augustine's career lies in this—that he who discovered for himself the supreme importance of the soul's individual life and regarded this as the very heart of religion, yet did more than any other man of his age to exalt the dignity and claim of the Church as an institution. It was he who paved the way for a theory which claimed for the Church the allegiance not only of individuals but of States; a theory the full-blown consequences of which appeared in the policy of Hildebrand and in that conception of the Church as a *societas perfecta* which is advocated by modern Jesuits.[2]

This is one of the strange antinomies of Augustinian theology but it lies beyond the range of our subject. We have seen that Augustine was led partly by the influence of Ambrose, partly by impulses derived from Neo-Platonism—to exalt the celibate and monastic ideal as the very embodiment of Christian perfection. But we must not forget the motive which actuated him. No more than Basil in the East or Ambrose and Jerome in the West did he foresee those tendencies in monachism which were destined ultimately to bring about its degradation and downfall in the sixteenth century. Nevertheless history testifies that wherever earnest men have been in revolt against a mechanical piety, a shallow morality, or worldliness in the Church, the spirit of Augustine has been at work bringing about a twofold revival: the revival of monasticism, and of mysticism in religion. For, as Harnack observes, "It has always been monachism in some form or other that has rescued a sinking Church, has set it free from the fetters of worldliness, and has successfully defended it when attacked. It has warmed the hearts of those whose love has grown cold, it has won back to the Church nations estranged from her. It has proved itself

[1] Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 235. Cp. Dr. Moberly's reference to asceticism as being in some cases at least "the irresistible outcome of pure love" (*Atonement and Personality*, p. 148).

[2] See on this point Bp. Robertson, *Regnum Dei*, pp. 344 foll.

to be in the history both of the Church and of civilization a factor of the first rank."[1]

To Augustine then we may trace what is best in monasticism. but he must also be regarded as one of the foremost of Christian mystics, to whom religion essentially consists not so much in obedience to a command or loyalty to an institution, as in the experience of divine communion. Augustine is one of those who, like the writer of the *de imitatione*, believed in the close interdependence of these two ideals. In flight from the world such men discovered the secret of divine fellowship and spiritual peace of which they were in search. For them submission to a monastic rule was the outward expression of the soul's self-dedication to God. And in the words of Irenaeus *Subjectio Dei requietio aeterna*.[2]

[1] Harnack, *Das Mönchthum*, p. 34.
[2] Iren. *c. Haer*, 4. 39. 4.

V

THE RECORD OF A SEEKER AFTER GOD

HITHERTO we have been concerned with the autobiography of Augustine and have considered the quality and power of the varied influences which combined to develop his personality. It remains to study the book as a narrative of personal experience, addressed to mankind in general (*humano generi*) with the object of rousing thought, and directing attention to the fundamental need of human nature—its need of God. "Why do I take this step?" Augustine asks "Simply that I and any one else who reads this book may be led to reflect how deep is the depth from which we must needs lift up our cry to Thee" (*2. 3. 5*).

This is no matter of purely academic interest. Some might be tempted to undervalue Augustine's testimony as that of an unpractical mystic. To such I may reply in words of the late Dr. Du Bose: "It is the greatest of mistakes to suppose that all that is true in mysticism is not applicable to action and is not indeed necessary to all truest and highest action. Mysticism means God or reality in all life, and there where God is most active and most urgent and most real. . . . Mysticism means for us the immediacy and reality of God in us: and this age wants God in us in all the complex relations and activities of our intense social life, in our homes, in our business, in our politics and our statesmanship." [1] The book that we are studying is the record of one who beginning with the search after truth in the abstract, discovers that truth is living and

[1] Preface to *Liberal and Mystical Writings of W. Law*, by W. Scott Palmer (Longmans, 1908).

divine: a power that changes human character and lays its transforming hand on the whole of life. Augustine tells us how and by what steps, through what depths of moral misery and mental perplexity, he made the great discovery which gave solemn significance to his past career. And this is perhaps the first great book, apart from Scripture, in which feeling —emotion—plays a leading part. Augustine has learned that the spiritual quest for God is an act of the entire personality —reason, emotion, will. On the very eve of his conversion, he expresses astonishment at the fact that reason plays so small and feeling so large a part in the discovery of truth. "Unlearned men (*indocti*)," he says, "rise up and take the kingdom by violence; while we with our heartless learning (*cum doctrinis nostris sine corde*) are wallowing, as it were, in carnal things" (8. 8. 19). The *Soliloquies*, written shortly before his baptism (387), are in form a dialogue between his *reason* and himself: but the supremacy of reason is disputed by the passionate *desire* to know God. "I know not," Augustine says, "how any rational demonstration of God could satisfy me; for I do not believe that I know anything as I desire to know God." In other words, mere intellect falls short of vital knowledge concerning the divine personality; for that knowledge "is nothing if not personal: it is the knowledge which issues only out of the personal contact of life with life."[2] It has been claimed for Augustine that he gave the final blow to the intellectualism of antiquity,[3] that tendency which is characteristic even of the later forms of Pagan philosophy like Stoicism or Neo-Platonism, and reappears in the type of Christian theology which we usually connect with Alexandria: the theology which looks upon faith as the highest form of Gnosis, and the saint as the true Gnostic or wise man. This tendency led, in Stoicism, to an exaggerated estimate of the worth of human effort, and in theology to the conception of redemption mainly as intellectual enlightenment. It was not easy for

[1] *Sol.* 1. 2. 7.
[2] H. S. Holland in *Lux Mundi*, p. 47.
[3] Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 64.

theologians of the Alexandrine type to understand the full significance of forgiveness; taking a more optimistic view of human nature than the Westerns, they betray a certain lack of insight into purely psychological problems. To Augustine on the other hand, not knowledge as such, but blessedness—*beata vita*—was the one worthy object of human endeavour. To him the most amazing and absorbing of facts was the possibility of communion between the soul and God; religion was a life of friendship with God—a life of love. Consequently he found himself in closer accord with the Hebrew psalmists than with the Greek philosophers to whom he owed so much. In his references to the Psalter his whole heart speaks: there he found the outlet he needed for his ardent yearning, his vehement self-abandonment. "O my God! how did I cry unto Thee as I read those hymns of faith, whose pious accents leave no room for the spirit of pride: I who was still a beginner in the true love of Thee. . . . How did I cry unto Thee in the language of those Psalms! How did they kindle my heart towards Thee: how did I burn to sing them if it were possible all the world over, if so I might abate the haughtiness of the race of man. Yet they are sung all the world over and there is none that can hide himself from thy heat." So again of one psalm in particular, the fourth (*Cum invocarem*), he recalls to mind how it kindled his whole being: how perfectly it gave utterance to the joy of a supreme discovery. "Thou hadst become sweet to me and hadst put gladness in my heart. And I cried aloud, reading these things in the letter and recognizing them in the spirit. Nor did I desire to be increased in earthly goods, since in Thy eternal simplicity I possessed another sort of corn and wine and oil" (9. 4. 10).

It would be instructive to trace the influence of the Psalter, not only on Augustine's thought, but even on his style.[1] It may suffice, however, to notice the link which unites them, namely, the conviction that God is all in all to the soul of man: its hope, its gladness, its portion for ever, its refuge, its

[1] Cp. Harnack, *A.K.*, pp. 10, 11; and *H.D.* 5. 84 note.

rest: the sole source of all good towards which it aspires. Nowhere in literature does this truth find richer expression than in the passionate invocation of God contained in the opening chapter of the *Soliloquies*, from which I will quote one sentence: "*Deus, a quo manant usque ad nos omnia bona . . . Exaudi, exaudi, exaudi me Deus meus, Domine meus, rex meus, pater meus, causa mea, spes mea, res mea, honor meus, domus mea, patria mea, salus mea, lux mea, vita mea.*" [1] Augustine's book is like the Psalter at least in this respect, that it furnishes experimental proof that God can be known by man: that He manifests Himself to the heart that seeks Him. *My heart hath talked of Thee, Seek ye my face. Thy face, Lord, will I seek.*

It is worth while to trace the course of Augustine's spiritual pilgrimage. In the second chapter of the first book of *Soliloquies* he is asked by Reason "What do you desire to know?" His answer is "I desire to know God and the soul: nothing more." Again at the opening of the second book he utters "the briefest and most comprehensive prayer of which he is capable": *Deus semper idem, noverim me, noverim Te. Oratum est.*[2]

1. *Noverim me.* Augustine is a pioneer in the science of experimental psychology. He furnishes an example of that concentration of interest on the individual soul which was so characteristic of the age in which he lived. The influence of Neo-Platonism doubtless had its share in bringing him to this point: but much more his own moral struggle and perplexities: his searching self-scrutiny, his study of the Psalter and of the Pauline Epistles. He is filled with an overwhelming sense of the mystery of his own being; the mystery of life—"this dying life or shall he call it living death?" (1. 6. 7)—in which he finds himself; above all the crowning enigma—the portent (*monstrum*), the disease (*ægritudo*) of the divided

[1] *Sol.* 1. 1. 4. The *Soliloquia* were written in the year of his baptism (387). Dr. Bright, *Lessons from the lives of three great Fathers*, appdx. xi. p. 253, quotes Abp. Trench's remark that "no one spoke of a 'soliloquy' before Augustine: the word was in fact 'invented by himself.'" Cp. *Retract.* i. 4.

[2] *Sol.* 2. 1. 1.

will (8. 9. 21). In particular he is fascinated by the intricate problems connected with the faculty of memory—that unfathomable treasury of thought and perception. "Great," he cries, "is the power of memory, inconceivably marvellous, O my God, profound and infinite in its manifoldness! And this thing is the mind, and I myself am it. What then am I, O my God? What is my nature? A life various, multiform, and of exceeding vastness" (10. 17. 26; cp. 10. 8. 15). Again, *Factus sum mihi terra difficultatis et sudoris nimii* (10. 16. 25). *Nec ego ipse capio quod sum* (10. 8. 15). *Grande profundum est ipse homo* (4. 14. 22). Men travel to see the wonders of nature—mountains, rivers, ocean, the starry heavens—but man himself is a depth which none can penetrate save with the help and guidance of God. *Intravi in intima mea duce Te*, he says; *Me ipsum mihi indica*, is his prayer,[1] and in this, whether consciously or not, he is following the direction of Plotinus "Return into thyself." So only does the soul attain at last to the object of its desire, to the vision of the divine.

The self-analysis of Augustine is extraordinarily minute. It embraces also an inquiry into the gradual growth of the life of sense. He marks the innate sinful tendency which displays itself even in infancy. "Where or when," he asks, "was I innocent?" He frequently reminds us of Pascal in the tone of his reflexions on the helplessness, misery and nothingness of man: his blindness and incapacity in face of the problems confronting him: the toilsomeness of the search after truth: the narrow range of the perceptive faculties: the poverty (*inopia*) which besets his powers whether of investigation or of expression (12. 1. 1). His language indeed recalls the very phrases which Pascal uses in a well-known passage of his *Thoughts on Religion*, "Je ne sais qui m'a mis au monde, ni ce que c'est le

[1] *Conf.* 7. 10. 16; 10. 37. 62. Baron von Hügel observes that Christianity is "throughout the revelation of personality." It reveals "the unsuspected depth and inexhaustibleness of human personality and of this personality's source and analogue in God" (M.E.R. 1. 26).

monde, ni que moi-même. *Je suis dans une ignorance terrible de toutes choses.* Je ne sais ce que c'est que mon corps, que mes sens, que mon âme : et cette partie même de moi, qui pense ce que je dis, et qui fait réflexion sur tout et sur elle-même, ne se connaît non plus que le reste." . . . Voilà mon état, plein de misère, de faiblesse, d'obscurité." [1]

Doubtless this emphatic insistence by Augustine upon the limitations of human faculties prepares the way for his exaltation of grace ; moreover, unlike Pascal, he is sustained by the thought that the God who has brought him into being and upholds his life is no relentless judge whose purpose is inscrutable, but a pitiful Father who orders all things for the highest good of His children. Our present point, however, is that Augustine's view of man's nature is the fruit of prolonged self-scrutiny. And we may remark that he departs from the psychology, such as it was, of his time in emphasizing *will* rather than intellect as the essence and inmost reality of personality. To him his fellow-men are *nihil aliud quam voluntates.*[2] Just as in the Godhead itself *voluntas Dei et potentia Deus ipse est,*[3] so in human nature the will is the man. Christianity is before everything else a *life* : a putting forth of victorious and organizing energy : and it was precisely here that Augustine knew himself to have failed. He was not the man that he aspired to be just in so far as his will was weak and enslaved by sinful habit. He recognized that the life of fellowship with God necessarily had its root in man's dedication of his will to goodness. Augustine's conversion consisted in this : *nolle quod volebam, velle quod volebas* (9. 1. 1). His self-analysis in fact taught him that the appeal of truth is made not primarily to reason or to emotion but to will. He would adopt for himself the prayer uttered by St. Paul on

[1] *Pensées*, seconde partie, art. 2. p. 154 (Paris, 1854). See some remarks in Bertrand, *St. Augustin*, p. 42.

[2] Cp. *de civ.* 14. 15 ; *Sol.* 1. 1. 5 : " Nihil aliud habeo quam voluntatem " ; *Conf.* 7. 3. 5. " Tam me sciebam habere voluntatem quam me vivere."

[3] *Conf.* 7. 4. 6. Cp. T. Aquin., *Summa c. gentes*, 1. 73 : " Voluntas Dei est Eius essentia."

behalf of his Ephesian converts: that *the eyes of their heart*—the seat of will and affection—*may be enlightened that they may know* the things of God.[1]

2. The petition *noverim me* is followed by *noverim Te.*

There is a famous chapter in the seventh book, coloured by reminiscences of Plotinus, in which Augustine traces the progress of his thought. He dwells on the fact that the beauty of the world testifies to the nature and character of its Creator. *Rapiebar ad te,* he says, *decore tuo* (7. 17. 23).[2] As we have seen, the perception of beauty led him to analyse the faculty which perceives it; thus he was led upwards from sensible objects to the sentient soul; thence to the reasoning faculty itself, and so to the eternal, immutable light which enables reason to form its judgments; to that, indeed, which is the *vita vitae*—the life of the soul's life (10. 6. 10). Thus, not by mere contemplation of the universe outside him, but only by penetrating into the hidden recesses of his own personality, did Augustine approach the knowledge of God Himself "the most ancient of all mysteries" (10. 40. 65). So long as he confined himself to fruitless investigation of the objects of sense he was on the wrong road altogether, "Thou wast before me, but I had forsaken even myself, nor could I find myself: how much less Thee?" (5. 2. 2). "O Beauty, so ancient and so new, behold Thou wast within and I without; and without I sought Thee; and I, deformed as I was, ran after those forms of beauty which Thou hast made. . . . Those things held me back from Thee, which could have no existence save in Thee" (10. 27. 38). Thus his own experience harmonized with the doctrine of Platonism in suggesting that human nature by its very constitution bears testimony to the true light (7. 9. 13); and that only by searching into his own soul can man attain to belief in a transcendent spiritual being akin to himself (3. 7. 12; 11. 9. 11):

[1] Eph. 1. 18. Cp. *Conf.* 8. 9. 21; 10. 26. 37.

[2] Cp. 10. 27. 38; 13. 20. 28; *de util. cred.* 16. 34: "Species rerum omnium, quam profecto ex aliquo verissimae pulchritudinis fonte manare credendum est." See also *de vera rel.*, 11. 21; 39. 72 and *de mor. eccl.* 1. 31. 66.

a being who is at once the immutable light of reason (7. 10. 16), the fountain of the soul's life (10. 20. 29) the supreme good towards which human nature aspires, and the final cause of its upward movement. "By means of my own soul itself," cries Augustine, "will I ascend to Him" (10. 7. 11, and 10 17. 26).[1]

God Himself, then, is the goal of the soul's pilgrimage, towards which it is impelled by its desire of the *vita beata*, the larger, fuller life which alone responds to its highest instincts and capacities. Moreover what is true of man is in its measure applicable to all created being of whatever grade or species. To all creatures God "is the fountain of life," *vita animarum, vita vitarum.*[2] Hence the stress which Augustine lays on the truth of the divine immanence. If the soul of man can pervade in thought and imagination and memory the whole of space, much more must omnipresence be attributable to the Creator of the soul.[3]

Thus in his own personality, one and indivisible, Augustine, like Plotinus, discovered "the impress of that most mysterious unity" (*vestigium secretissimæ unitatis*, 1. 20. 31) which was the source of his own being. His reasoning faculty he found to be a ray of the immutable light;[4] his will brought him into relation with a being in whom will and power are one—nay whose will and power are Himself.[5] Platonism had taught him to recognize in God the absolutely simple substance (2. 6. 13): "the eternal simplicity" (9. 4. 10) which, as contrasted with the manifoldness of created life, is the self-existent being through whom alone the soul comes into contact with reality: reality in every sphere. God is greatness: beauty (*pulchritudo*

[1] Cp. similar language in 1. 18. 29 "Quam tu secretus es, habitans in excelsis in silentio, Deus solus magnus!"; 8. 3. 8: "Quam excelsus es in excelsis et quam profundis in profundis!"

[2] *Conf.* 3. 8. 16; 3. 6. 10.

[3] See *Conf.* 1. 3. 3; 2. 6. 14; 5. 2. 2; 5. 9. 16; 6. 3. 4. Cp. *c. Epist. Fund.* 21.

[4] Cp. 12. 15. 20: "Intellectualis natura, quae contemplatione luminis lumen est."

[5] 7. 4. 6. Cp. 12. 15. 18.

pulcrorum omnium) :[1] goodness : blessedness : in a word, the sum of reality (*id quod est.* Cp. 12. 15. 19). To Augustine "God is not a particular somewhat—existing along with other things, but the inclusive totality of true being, beyond which is no reality ; to separate oneself from Him means to fall into nothingness ; to unite oneself to Him means to rise from appearance to reality."[2] God is one "whose being and whose life are one and the same thing." *Cui esse et vivere non aliud atque aliud est : quia summe esse atque summe vivere idipsum* (1. 6. 10).[3] The thought is more fully expressed in a striking passage contained in one of Augustine's later writings : "God," he says, "is that which is : *Ego sum qui sum :* . . . God therefore is unchangeable, whereas the soul is changeable. When the soul receives from God the power to be good, it becomes so by participation, as the eye sees by participation [of the light]. . . . In the same way, if the soul is good, that goodness whereof it partakes is in God (*apud Deum*) ; if the soul is truthful, that truth whereof it partakes is in God ; whereof if the soul partakes not, every man is a liar. . . . God is true to His word not by participating in truth but by begetting it."[4] This line of thought is essentially Platonistic, as Augustine expressly intimates when, in the course of his panegyric on the Platonists in the *de civitate* book VIII, he associates himself with them in holding the true doctrine that God is at once the author of nature, the revealer of truth, and the only source of blessedness.[5]

The very nature of the soul, therefore, bears witness to a life embracing and transcending it : to an archetypal reality,

[1] *Conf.* 3. 6. 10 ; cp. 4. 16. 29 ; 10. 27. 38.

[2] R. Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, 218. Cp. *Conf.* 13. 2. 3 : "Bonum illi [creato spiritui] est haerere tibi semper, ne quod adeptus est conversione, aversione lumen amittat, et relabatur in vitam tenebrosae abysso similem."

[3] Cp. *de vera rel.* 18. 35 : "Summum bonum est summe esse." See also *Conf.* 13. 3. 4 ; *de civ.* 11. 10 ; *de Trin.* 6. 4. 6.

[4] *in Joan*, tract. 39. 8. Cp. *Conf.* 2. 6. 14 : "Ita fornicatur anima cum avertitur abs te et quaerit extra te, quae pura et liquida non invenit, nisi cum redit ad te." See also *Conf.* 7. 10. 16.

[5] *de civit.* 8. 5.

beauty, simplicity, in the apprehension of which man attains to that knowledge of God in which his blessedness consists. It may be added that in one passage of book XIII (13. 11. 12),[1] Augustine so far anticipates the teaching of the *de Trinitate* as to declare that the analysis of human personality exhibits an image of the divine Trinity in Unity. But the hint is not worked out and for our present purpose may be passed over.

We may notice two practical consequences which follow from Augustine's conception of God as the supreme object of knowledge.

(1) In the first place he insists that the knowledge of God is the essential condition of all fruitful investigation in other fields of inquiry.

The great object of science, for instance, is to bring the human mind into contact with reality; and since God is the sum of reality, the knowledge of Him and of the soul in its dependence on Him is for man the one thing needful. Augustine is interested mainly in two great branches of scientific investigation: *ethics*, and what he would call *physics*, i.e. the knowledge of Nature. Now in ethics it is obvious that inquiry fails to reach its goal if it ignores the being of Him, the fruition of whom is blessedness. *Deum qui habet*, Augustine says, *beatus est.*[2] And in regard to the study of Nature, Augustine holds that it is only of value in so far as it leads the mind of the inquirer upwards to the supreme cause immanent in Nature. Otherwise such study, even if it does not inflate man with self-conceit (5. 3. 5), is superfluous. Augustine in fact agrees with the Neo-Platonists in regarding the questions suggested by natural science as practically negligible (*Beatus qui Te scit etiam si illa nesciat*, 5. 4. 7). Man's true concern is only with what is above him, not with what is below him. It is vain curiosity that "leads men to search into the secrets of Nature,

[1] On this passage the reader may be referred to the excellent note in G. and M. (p. 412). See also *Conf.* 13. 11. 12.

[2] *de beata vita*, 11 s. fin. Cp. *de mor. eccl.* 18: "Secutio Dei beatitatis appetitus est: consecutio autem ipsa beatitas." See also *Conf.* 2. 10. 18.

whereof the knowledge profits not and wherein nothing else but the knowledge itself is desired" (10. 35. 55.); cp. 5. 4. 7 and 5. 1). Curiosity Augustine even ranks as a sin. It seems, he says, to aim at a desire for *knowledge* rather than for *Him* who has the knowledge of all things (2. 6. 13).[1] In his Manichaean days he had tasted the mere vanity of *science falsely so called*, and the futility of that liberal culture to which he had so eagerly devoted himself, while he was still the slave of his evil desires: while he "had his *back* turned to the light and his *face* towards the objects on which it was shining" (4. 16. 30).[2] Indeed, Augustine's entire view of scientific culture illustrates his strong leaning towards a kind of "religious utilitarianism." The phrase is Eucken's, who suggests that Augustine "is interested not so much in the world as in the action of God in the world, and particularly upon ourselves. . . . Instead of musing upon the secrets of the heavens and the earth, the courses of the stars and the structure of animals, the Christian should be satisfied devoutly to glorify the goodness of God as the cause of all things heavenly and earthly. . . . Any further consideration of natural objects is superfluous, since it does not increase our happiness; inadmissible, since it consumes time required for more important things; dangerous to the convictions, since the direction of thought towards the world easily leads us to look upon the corporeal as alone real; injurious morally, as producing overweening self-conceit."[3] Hence we should patiently acquiesce in our ignorance, and suppress the vain thirst for unprofitable knowledge. In short, Augustine says (quoting the *Book of Wisdom*, ch. xiii.): *Vani sunt certe omnes homines quibus non inest Dei scientia* (8. 1. 2).[4]

[1] Cp. *de vera rel.* 29. 52. In the contemplation of Nature "non vana et peritura curiositas exercenda est, sed gradus ad immortalia et semper manentia faciendus." See also a strong passage, *Conf.* 5. 3. 4.

[2] Augustine's disparagement of his literary studies reminds us of Tertullian's fierce denunciation of the profession of letters in *de idololatria* 10. Cp. *Conf.* 1. 16. 25 foll.

[3] R. Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, p. 224.

[4] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 1. 46 remarks on

It is clear that this attitude of mind is the outcome of violent reaction and disillusionment. It involves peculiar risks for religion itself and unhappily it led to serious consequences. Augustine's view of the relative worthlessness of secular learning exercised a decisive influence upon the whole intellectual outlook of medieval Christendom.[1] It was not till the thirteenth century that the revived study of Aristotle, to whose influence Augustine owed a debt which perhaps he does not adequately acknowledge, stimulated inquiring minds to investigate other departments of knowledge than those to which they had hitherto confined themselves; and only with this new movement can the systematic study of science be said to have begun. The Augustinian tendency however survives in such a book as the *de imitatione* of Thomas à Kempis (d. 1471).

(2) The second consequence which followed from Augustine's conception of God as the one object of knowledge was not intellectual but religious. His search after reality ends in the discovery that in God the soul finds its rest. *Quies est apud te valde et vita imperturbabilis* (2. 10. 18; cp. 2. 6. 13). The famous sentence, *Inquietum est cor nostrum donec requiescat in Te* occurs in the first chapter of book I.; and at the close of book XIII. the thought recurs that as God Himself rested on the sabbath day from all His works, so there remains in eternity a sabbath rest for the soul. An atmosphere of restfulness, so to speak, pervades the *Confessions*. Augustine has reached the haven of his desire:

> [Illi] parta quies, nullum maris aequor arandum;
> Arva neque Ausoniae, semper cedentia retro,
> Quaerenda.[2]

Intellectual problems vex him no more; in the divine light they find their solution. The lingering infirmity of his will is

the peculiar temptation of the religious instinct "to starve or to suspect, to cramp or to crush this phenomenal apprehension and investigation in the supposed interests of the ulterior truths."

[1] Cp. Ueberweg, *History of Philosophy*, 1. p. 337.

[2] Verg. *aen.* 3. 495 foll.

yielding to the gentle action of grace.[1] "O that I might find rest in Thee," Augustine cries. "O that Thou wouldest enter into my heart and inebriate it, that I might forget all my sorrows and embrace Thee as my only good."[2] True, there rises a "higher height" beyond him, but what he seeks is after all only a fuller measure of a peace which he already enjoys: the peace which he has found in submission to God—*Deus salutis omnimodae* (9. 4. 12)—His protector and deliverer, His healer and guide. "Thou wilt increase Thy gifts in me, O Lord, ever more and more" (10. 30. 42); "On Thee I cast my care that I may live, and I will consider the wondrous things of Thy law" (10. 43. 70). Thus confiding wholly in the divine mercy, Augustine rests as one who has given himself up to be *borne onwards towards perfection* by the strong hands of infinite wisdom and love.[3]

It may, I think, be said that in this conception of God Augustine makes some advance upon a more ancient form of Christian piety and that in so doing he approaches nearer to the spirit of the New Testament. The earliest Christian writers can hardly be said to exhibit the temper which pervades the *Confessions*. They seem to waver between hope and fear; they do not habitually display the assurance of peace in believing. In the so-called Second Epistle of Clement, for example, we find what might be called an anxious type of piety. "If we do the will of Christ," says the writer, "we shall find rest (*ἀνάπαυσιν*); but if we do it not, nothing shall deliver us from eternal punishment, in case we neglect His precepts" (6. 7). The dominant keynote of the treatise or homily is the certainty of judgement, the horror of damnation, the neces-

[1] Cp. 1. 5. 6: "Angusta est domus animae meae quo venias ad eam: dilatetur abs Te. Ruinosa est; refice eam." etc.

[2] *Conf.* 1. 5. 5; Cp. 13. 13. 14; 14. 15.

[3] See 6. 16. 26. Cp. 10. 30. 42: "Nunc tamen quid adhuc sim in hoc genere mali mei, dixi Domino bono meo, exultans cum tremore in eo quod donasti mihi, et lugens in eo quod inconsummatus sum, sperans perfecturum te in me misericordias tuas usque ad pacem plenariam." This passage well illustrates the spirit pervading the *Confessions*: the spirit of joy, of penitential sorrow, of hope. The tone of 11. 1. 1; 11. 9. 11 is similar.

sity of continual penitence and holy fear. "Let us forsake ungodliness lest evils overtake us; for only if we are zealous in well-doing shall peace follow us" (10. 2).[1] Much the same may be said of the *Shepherd* of Hermas, and probably other instances might be found of a temper which is narrow and timid in proportion as its view of grace is vacillating and indefinite. On the other hand, in so far as Augustine, with his strong perception of the reality and misery of sin, proclaims the virtual omnipotence of grace, he revives the teaching and spirit of St. Paul and hands it on stamped with the seal of his own personal experience. Religion is to him not primarily the anxious service of a transcendent Deity to whom all things bow and obey, but a living fellowship and communion with One in whom the soul finds all that satisfies its need. "For thee I crave, O righteousness and innocence, fair and lovely with heavenly light, ever satisfying yet ever desired. . . . With thee is peace in highest measure and life undisturbed. Whoso enters into thee enters into the joy of his Lord and shall not fear: *et habebit se optime in optimo*" (2. 10. 18). "Rest in Him and you shall be at peace"—*quieti eritis* (4. 12. 18).[2]

Such then is the type of piety that is characteristic of Augustine. It is of course true that he gave an impulse to many different tendencies in practical Christianity; but if we confine our view to the teaching of the *Confessions*, we are justified in calling Augustine in a sense the father of mysticism. Mysticism is a term of notorious ambiguity, but we may be content to define it with Dr. Du Bose as a sense of "the immediacy and reality of God in us"; or with Robert Moberly as "the experience of the Holy Ghost."[3] It is this that makes the *Confessions* a living record—a book for all time. Augustine

[1] The word "peace" occurs only here in 2 Clement. Harnack *H.D.* 5. 67 says "The characteristic feature of the old Christian piety was vacillation between hope and fear" (He refers to Tert. *de cultu fem.*, 2. 2, "Timor fundamentum pietatis est") "The psychological form of piety was *unrest*; i.e. fear and hope."

[2] Cp. 13. 4. 5. The thought of *resting* in God alone is particularly prominent in bk. 13. See (*e.g.*) 13. 4. 5; 7. 8.; 8. 9; 38. 53.

[3] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 312.

has discovered the essential secret of religion: the possibility of a life *in the world*—in Rome, in Carthage, in Milan, in Hippo—which is also a life *in Christ*. He has learned that it is possible to be full of occupations and cares, yet full of the Holy Ghost. One of his favourite texts is Psalm lxxiii. 28: *Mihi autem adhaerere Deo bonum est* (7. 11. 17); and he has realized that this act of adhesion to God—the secret of peace, power and blessedness—is an act of the entire personality, but more especially of the *will*. Augustine's surrender of his will in conversion was the first step towards an ever fuller correspondence with the divine purpose, an ever deeper apprehension of the divine indwelling, the divine guidance, the divine predestination. And this experience of his we recognize as normal. It harmonizes with what we know of the experience of the children of God in every age. As Moberly points out in the closing chapter of his great book on *Atonement and Personality*, "the spirit of mysticism is the true and essential Christianity." [1]

But here we are met by a fact which calls for attention. Augustine's personal religion—the type of piety which I have called "normal"—rests on the basis of inward experience. But we cannot forget that his conversion, his personal discovery of God, coincides with an act of whole-hearted submission to the Church. In his case at any rate the authority of the Church enters as a factor into personal religion. Accordingly, for the sake of completeness, it may be well to trace so far as we can the history of Augustine's view of the Church, and to estimate its significance.

His long connexion with the Manichaeans and eager acceptance of their doctrines had led him to question the *rationality* of Christian belief. In particular, he found the Old Testament a stumbling-block, and he came to feel the need of some method of interpretation which might vindicate the position it held in Christian practice and tradition. We have seen that he was reassured on this point by the teaching of Ambrose. But i

[1] *Atonement and Personality*, p. 311.

is noteworthy that his desire for authority had its roots in a growing distrust of reason. "I knew not," he says, "what to think concerning Thy nature, or what road leads, or leads back, to Thee. Accordingly, since we are too weak to discover the truth by the mere light of reason, for this cause we need the authority of Holy Writ. I began to believe that Thou wouldest never have assigned such eminent and world-wide authority to Scripture unless it had been Thy will that through it Thou shouldest be believed and through it sought" (6. 5. 7 and 8). Again, describing a later stage in his progress, he says, "Thou didst not suffer the waves of doubt to sweep me away from the belief that Thou art; that Thy substance is unchangeable; that Thou takest thought for men and wilt judge them; that Thou hast placed the way of salvation, the way to the life after death, in Christ Thy Son our Lord and in the holy Scriptures which the authority of Thy catholic Church guarantees. These were my axioms, firmly rooted in my mind, starting from which I went on with feverish eagerness to ask, 'Whence came evil?'" (7. 7. 11).

Augustine, then, felt the need of authority, in the first instance for himself, as a welcome support to the weakness of his own restless and perplexed mind.[1] He could not be satisfied with a religion based merely on feeling; he required something that would corroborate and justify his own experience.[2] "I wanted," he says, "to be as certain of things unseen as I was that seven and three make ten" (6. 4. 6).

In a well-known passage of his most important anti-Manichaean tract he goes so far as to say that he should not even believe the Gospel were he not moved thereto by the authority of the catholic Church.[3] The office of the Church, he supposed, was

[1] *See de util. cred.* 8. 20; 16. 34.

[2] Cp. Glover, *op. cit.* p. 214. "The Church was the voucher for the Gospel as a result of its long years of experience. For so long as it had been in the world, it had uniformly been solving the problem of holy living. It accounted for this by the doctrine of the Incarnation. . . . Augustine accepted the experience of the Church as confirmed by his own."

[3] *c. Epist. Fund.* 6.

to guarantee the truth of Christian beliefs when reason failed to establish them. In point of fact, the Church had responded to his craving for certainty; it had assured him of the reality of the blessings of the new life: forgiveness, grace, fellowship with believers, the sense of union with Christ. To him the Church was coextensive with all that he understood by Christianity. It was virtually identical with the kingdom of God.[1]

But again, Augustine believed that the authority of the Church was essential to the welfare of the great mass of believers, who were for the most part uneducated (*ἰδιῶται*) and in continual need of spiritual guidance and discipline.[2] To such the Church must necessarily be a *domus disciplinae*. Thus the word *faith* tended to become identical with an authoritative creed, and even Christian morality wore the aspect of obedience to a definite code of ecclesiastical rules and ordinances. Thus a large part of the responsibility which had hitherto—even in Augustine's own case—rested upon the individual, devolved henceforth upon the Church, which fulfilled the function both of a divine oracle proclaiming the truth, and of an embodied conscience, defining the scope and limits of duty.

It is true that this tendency had long been in progress in the Western Church; and in later times it led to very far-reaching consequences both in religion and ethics.[3] In view of these consequences it is sometimes asserted that the Latin spirit finds its representative embodiment in the Church of Rome.[4] When the Empire finally broke up, the spirit of imperialism survived in the Roman Church; and Augustine himself undoubtedly prepared the way for the later Western idea of the Church as "an *imperium* under an *Imperator*, ruled by ministers he alone could appoint and he alone depose"; so that in effect "the clergy became the Church, the Church the religion, and the religion a transformed Roman empire

[1] In *c. Epist. Fund.* 5 Augustine mentions the grounds of his allegiance to the Church. Cp. Robertson, *R.D.* p. 173.

[2] *de util. cred.* 10. 24; 12. 27.

[3] Cp. Eucken, *The Problem of Human Life*, pp. 243 foll.

[4] See (*e.g.*), Harnack, *What is Christianity?* [E. T.], p. 251.

with the Pope for emperor, bishops for procurators, and the priesthood for the magistrates and legionaries that levied the taxes, enforced the laws, upheld the unity and maintained the peace of the civilized world." [1]

We must return, however, to Augustine's own theory of the Church and the part which it played in his conversion. The Church appealed to him in the first instance not as an idea but as a visible and impressive fact. It attracted him by the majestic solidity of its order; by its organization, its uniform doctrine, its authoritative tradition, its solemn and picturesque rites. In its practical life his imagination and sentiment, not less than his devotional fervour, found a real satisfaction.[2] It has been truly said that he owed his conversion in great measure "to the silent argument of the catholic Church. By the Church is inspired all that warmth of love, gratitude, compunction, ineffable yearning of the inmost soul which speaks to God in the *Confessions*." [3] "Let us love the Lord our God," writes Augustine in his commentary on the Psalms; "let us love His Church: Him as a Father, her as a Mother; Him as Lord, her as His handmaiden, for we are the children of His handmaiden. . . . What does it profit to confess Thy Lord, to honour God, to preach Him, to acknowledge His Son, to confess Him that sits at the Father's right hand, and withal to speak injuriously of His Church?" [4] Nor did the appeal of the Church awaken in Augustine a merely passing emotion. His whole tendency under the influence of Platonism was to idealize it. He acknowledged, indeed, the present imperfection and mixed condition of the visible society; [5] but behind the inextricably mingled body of faithful and hypocrites, lay the invisible, heavenly and eternal Church of which the visible society was only the shadow. And this led him on to

[1] Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 107.

[2] Cp. *de vera rel.* 3. 4 and 5 on the way in which Augustine was impressed by the visible fact of Church life.

[3] Robertson *R.D.*, p. 186.

[4] *enarr.* in *psa.* 88 serm. 2. 14. In *Conf.* 1. 11. 17 he calls the Church "the Mother of us all."

[5] Cp. *Conf.* 13. 12. 13.

draw another vital distinction—that between the *certus numerus praedestinatorum* and the non-elect, who though nominally included in the visible community were destined to find no permanent place in the true *Communio Sanctorum.*

Further inquiry into Augustine's doctrine of the Church lies beyond the limits of our subject. It may suffice to remark that it was largely the product of that Platonistic idealism which conceived of reality as necessarily timeless, immaterial, transcendent, and regarded the historically conditioned or imperfect state as partaking of reality only in a lower or secondary degree.[1] The contradictions and inconsistencies which beset his doctrine of the Church resolve themselves into this: that Augustine speaks sometimes as a Platonist, sometimes as a bishop immersed in the practical task of ruling a Christian community. As Bishop Robertson says, "Augustine's transcendentalism and his predestinarianism on the one hand and on the other his practical working churchmanship, his insistence on the visible catholic Church as the exclusive pale of salvation, remain unreconciled; they lie side by side as disparate elements in his mind, incapable of any true synthesis."[2] In the *de civitate* we seem to find his ultimate view; a mystical conception of the Church half biblical, half philosophical: the City of God being regarded as the invisible congregation of saints—the *numerus praedestinatorum*—the true Church.[3]

This true or "interior" Church was simply "the Church visible *minus* those who hereafter would be eliminated as having no part in her true life." It consisted of "those members of the visible body who realized their privileges and their obligations, who were Christians inwardly as well as outwardly," and who were therefore "the objects of a divine predestinating election."[4]

[1] *Regnum Dei*, p. 196.

[2] *Ibid.* p. 201.

[3] Cp. Loofs, *Leitfaden zur studium der Dogmengeschichte*, § 52. The distinction between an invisible church on earth as distinct from the visible society of the baptized is not primitive. See *Essays on the Early History of the Church and the Ministry*, pp. 9–22.

[4] W. Bright, *Lessons from the lives of three great Fathers*, appdx.

But there is no hint in the *Confessions* of this later view. Those who care to pursue the subject may be referred to the exhaustive discussion in Bishop Robertson's fifth *Bampton Lecture*.

In the *Confessions* Augustine thinks of the Church as a Mother in whose bosom his troubled spirit has found rest; as the home of the true faith (7. 5. 7), the nourisher of that God-directed life, in which salvation consists. But he does not dwell upon the thought of the Church apart from Him whose love and pity, grace and power, it represents and conveys to the converted soul. In regard to his later doctrine of the Church, we do not know how far Augustine ever became conscious of the problems which it suggested, or of the unresolved antinomies which afterwards occasioned so much bitter controversy and led to such disastrous developments in opposite directions. But it is interesting to observe how his own experience of the formidable difficulty of arriving at truth determined his attitude towards gainsayers and heretics. Nothing could be more moving than the opening passages of his polemical work against the Manichaeans, the book *contra Epistolam Manichaei*, etc., to which we have already referred. "Let those," he writes, "wax fierce against you who know not with what toil truth is attained, with what difficulty errors are avoided. Let those wax fierce who know not how rare and arduous an achievement it is to overcome carnal fantasies by the serenity of a devout mind; . . . who know not with what sore difficulty the eye of the inward man is healed and enabled to behold its true sun." [1] He goes on to describe his own past misery; his tormenting uncertainty and perplexity, his slowness and dullness of apprehension, his vain imaginings and obstinate persistence in error. "For my part," he says, "I cannot wax fierce against you—you with

xvii., pp. 280 foll. Dr. Bright observes that Augustine's idea of an "interior" Church is not to be confounded with that of an "invisible" Church as held by many Protestants. Cp. Fairbairn, *Christ in Modern Theology*, p. 544 foll., and see Hamilton, *The people of God*, vol. ii., pp. 172. foll.; Gore, *The Church and the Ministry*, p. 19.

[1] *c. Epist. Fund.* 3.

whom I ought now to bear as I bore with myself in those days, and whom I ought to treat with the same patience which my friends extended to me at the time when I was wandering, wild and blind, in the tenets professed by you." [1]

So wrote Augustine some three years before he composed the *Confessions*. He believed that the wisest way to deal with error was the method of persuasion, exhortation and discussion.[2] It was only in later years, after he became a bishop, that his earlier judgment was overborne mainly by the precedent which the Imperial Government had established in its high-handed dealings with Pagans, and which was strongly pressed upon him as an expedient policy by his fellow-bishops. "To these examples," he writes, "set before me by my colleagues, I yielded. For my earliest opinion was that no man should be forced into the unity of the Church; that only argument, disputation and reasoning should be used; and this lest those whom we knew as avowed heretics should become merely feigned Catholics. But this opinion of mine was overborne, not by contradictory arguments, but by instances that carried conviction." [3] Thus Augustine unhappily yielded, against his better judgement, to the principle *Cogite intrare* with all its fatal consequences in the history of Christendom. The *Confessions* so far as they bear on this question, undoubtedly represent his earlier and wiser conviction.[4]

We have endeavoured to trace the double stream of tendency which led Augustine towards his conversion: on the one hand the pressure of a profound inward experience, stimulated to a great extent and conditioned by the peculiar intellectual discipline he had undergone; on the other, the irresistible attraction and persuasive appeal of the catholic Church commended by the actual Church life of Milan, and by the personality and teaching of its great bishop.

[1] *c. Epist. Fund.*, 3; Cp. 29 and *de nat. Boni*, 48.
[2] *Ibid.* 1.
[3] *Epist.* 93. 17. Cp. 185. 24.
[4] See Bright, *op. cit.* 156. M. Bertrand in pp. 386 foll. points out some considerations which should perhaps qualify our judgement on Augustine's action.

The result is that Augustine represents a type of personal religion which has endured and will endure, since it takes into account two permanent elements in human nature. On the one hand, religion necessarily implies a personal relationship between the soul and its Creator; and we have seen that it was through the study of his own personality and spiritual capacities that Augustine attained to the knowledge of God. Indeed, as Dr. Bright points out, "No Christian writer has ever been more thoroughly penetrated by a sense of what is involved in the words 'My God.'" On the other hand, through his social instincts, Augustine discovered the true place of corporate life in the discipline of character: the function of the Church in the renewal and training of personality.

Two concluding observations suggest themselves:

(1) Baron von Hügel finds in Augustine a combination of two out of the three elements which be believes to be constant in religion: viz. Intellectualism and Mysticism.[1] Perhaps we may qualify this view by adding that in his devotion to the Church Augustine markedly displays the third element—Institutionalism; for in fact he combines full submission to the external authority of the Church with a keen intellectual interest in truth as truth, and with a type of piety which can only be called mystical.

(2) Again: it has been suggested that Augustine's view of the individual soul resting in God contains a "quietistic" or even "narcotic" element; and that its tendency is enervating in so far as it substitutes feeling for action and encourages spiritual isolation and self-absorption.[2] There is justice in this criticism: it may even be said that in Augustine a tendency has its starting point which finds later expression in the *de imitatione*, with its absence of all concern in regard to the social welfare of mankind. But it seems clear that Augustine was not unaware of his danger in this respect. He acknowledges frankly his instinctive tendency to shrink from the life of action, and to seek shelter in the seclusion of a monastic

[1] *The Mystical Element of Religion*, 1. p. 61.
[2] Harnack, *H.D.* 5. 75.

life. But he realized that life *in Christ* implies a life of fellowship with Christ's members, a life of service to His visible body; and that the grace of God is bestowed on individuals and on churches not as a privilege only but also as a responsibility. The ethical treatises of Augustine's later years make it plain, I think, that he had come to regard the service of his fellow-men as a quite indispensable part of vital religion, and blessedness as a consummation to be sought and enjoyed only in fellowship with others. Thus, he writes in one of his epistles: "This life of blessedness let us desire for ourselves, this for the city whereof we are citizens. For the source of blessedness is not different for the city and for the individual man, seeing that a city is nothing else than a united multitude of individual men." [1] Nor has any Christian writer insisted more urgently than he on the important function of the Church in supplying the moral needs of the State and inspiring it with worthy ideals.[2]

Probably this was an aspect of religion which Augustine was destined to realize during the strenuous thirty-five years of his episcopate. But the root from which sprang his unsparing self-devotion as pastor of a flock and as champion of social morality was the discovery of God as the strength of his own soul. So it was with St. Paul himself, whose experience was in so many points repeated in Augustine. So it was with those Christians of Macedonia whose example of service the Apostle commends in the words *They first gave their own selves to the Lord and* [*then*] *to us by the will of God*.[3]

At certain periods, doubtless, the history of Western Christendom displays a tendency to over-develop one side of Augustine's teaching—in the direction of secularizing the Church and exalting submission to its authority as the supreme demand of religion. It is also true that the doctrines which we connect pre-eminently with St. Paul—the doctrines of sin and grace, individual faith and justification, divine predestination and

[1] *Epist.* 155 *Macedonio*, 9.
[2] See *de mor. eccl.*, 63; *Epist.* 138. 15.
[3] 2 Cor. viii. 5.

human freedom—revived and emphasized by Augustine—have never been left without witness in the Church. But we should not forget that while St. Paul is generally regarded as the "apostle of individualism," there is no inspired writer who teaches more plainly and emphatically the doctrine of an elect people—the new Israel of God—through and in which alone the individual fulfils his true destiny, and responds to the divine purpose. If the epistle to the Romans deals mainly with the justification by faith of the individual soul, the epistle to the Ephesians bears witness to the correlative truth that the Church is the appointed sphere of grace and sanctification, and that the individual Christian is only perfected by submission to the discipline of corporate life in a divine society.

VI

THE PLACE OF THE *CONFESSIONS* IN LITERATURE AND IN RELIGION

WE have reviewed the different forms of influence which acted upon the mind and character of Augustine before his conversion. He had come under the sway of all the most potent spiritual movements of his time; but he is no mere product of his age. However far our analysis may be carried there remains that incommunicable individuality of genius which marks him out as one of the outstanding figures in history.

We may now return to the book itself. M. Bertrand remarks that Augustine's estimate of his work would certainly have widely differed from ours. He would probably have preferred his treatises on Grace, or his tractates on St. John, to the *Confessions:* but to us the man is more interesting than the polemical theologian, and the *Confessions* hold a place in the world's literature which no one would think of assigning to any other of their author's voluminous works.[1] In *Retract.* 2. 6 indeed he speaks very modestly of the book. He knows that it has greatly pleased, and still continues to please, Christian people generally: but in his own view the *Confessions* have merit only in so far as they set forth the praise of God and excite love to Him.

In one of his letters [2] he writes in a similar strain. He sends a copy of the *Confessions* to his friend Darius with a gentle warning against adulation. "In these pages," he says, "behold me as I am, in order that you may not praise me beyond my desert. . . . See what I have been in myself and through myself: and if anything in me pleases you, join me in praising

[1] *St. Augustin*, p. 363. [2] *Epist.* 231 *ad Darium.*

Him whom I desire to be praised on my account rather than myself, since He made us, not we ourselves. Nay we had lost ourselves, but He who made us re-made us. . . . Pray for me that I fail not, but rather may be perfected. Pray for me, my son, pray."

In the *Confessions* Augustine was concerned only with himself; in the enormous literary labours of his episcopate he thinks only of that which he deems far more important: of divine truth, of the Church, of the spiritual needs and interests of mankind.

What then is there to be said of the book itself?

1. First, we should notice the *originality* of Augustine's design. No poet or philosopher before his time had attempted a similar task. No extant book displays similar characteristics. We may perhaps regard the reflexions on his own career in the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius as containing the germ of an autobiography; but neither in substance nor in form are they "Confessions." In them, Matthew Arnold observes, we see the philosophic Emperor as he is, "wise, just, self-governed, tender, thankful, blameless: yet with all this, agitated—stretching out his arms for something beyond—*tendentemque manus ripae ulterioris amore.*" [1] With this compare the Augustine of the *Confessions*: resting after the fevered struggle with moral weakness and spiritual perplexity in the very arms of God. Nor, so far as I am aware, does the history of literature supply us with any other instance of such a book till we come to Rousseau's *Confessions* in the eighteenth century. For, in spite of a difference of tone and spirit which sets the two books in entirely different categories, there are certain superficial points of resemblance which suggest a comparison between these two rare products of genius.[2]

Rousseau's work (I may remind you) was begun in England some twelve years before his death.[3] It displays certain broad characteristics which lie on the surface.

[1] *Essays in criticism*: "Marcus Aurelius," s. fin.

[2] Cp. Bp. Martensen, *Christian Ethics* (general), pp. 291 foll. [E. T.].

[3] It was begun in the autumn of 1766. Rousseau's death took place July 2, 1778.

Rousseau begins with a bold claim to entire originality. "Je forme une entreprise qui n'eut jamais d'exemple, et qui n'aura point d'imitateur; je veux montrer à mes semblables un homme dans toute la vérité de la nature, et cet homme ce sera moi."

Like Augustine, Rousseau wrote in an age of decadence, when the established order of things in Europe was verging swiftly towards an immense catastrophe; towards an explosion of pent-up forces destined completely to transform the political and social ideals of men. In general character, moreover, his work is like that of Augustine in so far as it is an instance—the first modern instance—of that introspective type of literature which appealed so powerfully to the taste of the nineteenth century.[1] Rousseau records the detailed and intimate history of an undisciplined but gifted soul, and in so doing carries introspection to its extreme limit. Indeed, it has been said of him that, "Like most explorers, he became obsessed with his own discoveries."[2] He describes without reticence, almost without conscience, the morbid pathological facts of his moral development, in a way that makes some parts of his book almost unreadable. Nevertheless he pursues his general design with a consistency and candour which challenge respect. Moreover the motive of his work resembles that of Augustine to a certain extent. He wrote the book late in life with a view to defending himself against imputations which his sensitive temperament could not silently endure. But perhaps it is the leading idea of Rousseau that brings him most nearly into line with Augustine. At the root of his

[1] From this point of view Cardinal Newman seems to be justified in naming together the *Confessions* of Augustine and the poetry of Byron, Byron, like Augustine, depicts himself "seeking for happiness in the creature, roaming unsatisfied from one object to another, breaking his soul upon itself and bitterly confessing and imparting his wretchedness to all around him." But he adds "while each makes confessions, Augustine addresses them to the saints, Byron to the powers of evil" (*Historical Sketches*, vol. 2, p. 144).

[2] G. L. Strachey, *Landmarks in French Literature*, p. 193. Cp. J. Morley, *Rousseau*, vol. 2., pp. 303 foll.

social theories lay an overmastering sense of the dignity of human nature as such: the inalienable worth and interest of personality. This idea, so richly developed by Augustine himself, left, as we have pointed out, an indelible impress on the history of religion. Rousseau's grasp of it not only exercised a marked influence upon later literature, but also supplied a potent stimulus to the pioneers of political change in Europe. His gospel of the *contrat social*; his appeal for a "return to Nature" had a profound effect on popular thought in France, and produced social consequences of incalculable importance.[1]

In one respect, however, the gulf that parts Rousseau from Augustine simply cannot be bridged. Augustine addresses his confessions primarily to God. He knows that what he is in God's sight, that alone he is. He has an eye to his fellow-men only in so far as he desires to inspire them with wonder at the triumphs of divine grace (10. 4. 5); for this reason only he appeals to the generosity and compassion of "the general heart"—the "fraternal heart" as he calls it—of men. Now Rousseau, on his very first page, makes an appeal to God of which a few words only need to be, or indeed can be, quoted. He imagines himself standing before the awful bar of divine judgement with his own book in his hand and the following words in his mouth: "This is what I have done, what I have thought, what I have been. I have here unveiled my inner life, exactly as Thou, O Supreme Being, hast Thyself beheld it. Let the innumerable multitude of my peers be assembled round me; let them hear my confession. . . . Let each in his turn discover his utmost soul at the foot of Thy throne with the same sincerity; and then let a single one among them say, if he dares: I was better than yonder man."

We have studied Augustine's book closely enough to recognize that its spirit is less that of Rousseau than of Pascal; it may perhaps remind us also of certain grave passages in Bishop Butler's writings or (to take a more recent instance) in Newman's

[1] Cp. Carlyle, *The French Revolution*, bk. ii. ch. 7.

Apologia. There is no touch of what is merely sentimental or morbid in Augustine's self-disclosure. In one concrete instance he contemplates that human nature which, left to itself is so wayward and helpless, but which, uplifted by grace, can attain to such heights of moral sublimity. He dwells repeatedly on the infinite difficulty of true self-knowledge: the arduous nature of the search for truth: the "God-blindness" which is the inevitable penalty of human presumption and pride. On the whole, therefore, we are constrained to range Rousseau and Augustine in two separate classes. Rousseau's book, whatever may be its literary merits, is no more than the autobiography of an eccentric genius: Augustine's is a book of devotion for all time.

From a literary standpoint, the suggestion [1] that Goethe's *Faust* may be profitably compared with Augustine's book, deserves consideration. It will be recalled that Carlyle excuses himself from making Goethe his "Hero as literary man" on the ground that the general state of knowledge about Goethe is so defective. This is probably the case with most of us, but I may assume that *Faust* is tolerably familiar to most of my readers: and I think they will find it interesting to pursue the line of thought thus indicated. Goethe is a writer whose own moods are faithfully reflected in his writings. In *Faust* turning away from faith, and yearning for the infinite, first, in unattainable knowledge, next, in unlimited enjoyment of life, we are justified in finding a semblance of the poet himself. Moreover Faust, like Augustine, is a seeker after truth whose study of nature and philosophy has ended in disillusionment and despair.

> "Alas! I have explored
> Philosophy and Law and Medicine,
> And over deep Divinity have pored,
> Studying with ardent and laborious zeal;
> And here I am at last, a very fool,
> With useless learning cursed,
> No wiser than at first.
>
> . . . . .

[1] Made by Dr. Harnack in his lecture on the *Confessions*.

But I have lost all peace of mind
Whate'er I knew or thought I knew
Seems now unmeaning and untrue,
The fancy too has died away,—
The hope that I might in my day
Instruct and elevate mankind." [1]

Like Augustine, Faust finds himself no nearer to the goal of true wisdom: like him he compassionates the disciples who have been his dupes: like him he is haunted by reminiscences of moments in early youth when the religious instinct suddenly woke to life:

"Oh once in boyhood's happy time, Heaven's love
Showered down upon me its mysterious kiss
Hallowing the stillness of the Sabbath day;
Feelings resistless, incommunicable
Yearnings for something that I knew not of,
Deep meanings in the full tones of the bells
Mingled—a prayer was burning ecstasy—
Drove me a wanderer through lone fields and woods," [2] etc.

Like Augustine he at one time has recourse to the aid of magic and then passionately discards it. Like Augustine he experiences moments of spiritual elevation and is moved by a sudden impulse to seek heavenly light in the prologue of St. John's Gospel—an impulse, however, which perishes in the birth.

But the points of contrast between Faust and Augustine are so obvious as scarcely to need pointing out. The good which Augustine seeks is God: that which Faust sets before himself is the knowledge of Nature. Contrast Augustine's "The heart finds no rest till it rests in Thee" with Faust's despairing appeal to Nature:

"Oh! could the blighted soul but find thee near!
To thee still turns the withered heart;
In thee the spirit, seared and lonely,
Childlike, would seek the sweet restorative;
On thy maternal bosom feed and live.
I ask a solace thou dost not impart;
The good I hunger for thou dost not give!" [3]

[1] Tr. by Anster in *Morley's Universal Library* (E. Routledge) p. 88 f.
[2] *Ibid.* p. 114. [3] *Ibid.* p. 94.

Faust chooses "the spirit of earth" and its treasure: God is not the object of his yearning or of his search. He hears the chorus of angels singing the Easter hymn, and cries:—

> "I hear your message, but I have not faith;
> And miracle is fond Faith's favourite child!
> I cannot force myself into the spheres
> Where these good tidings of great joy are heard![1]

Faust has no sense of spiritual need: no consciousness of sin: no thirst for inward purity or peace of conscience. The difference between him and Augustine is that between the ψυχικὸς ἄνθρωπος and the πνευματικὸς ἄνθρωπος of St. Paul. To him the things of the Spirit are foolishness, and the things of time end in vanity.

At the same time the fact may be recalled that in the second part of Faust, completed within a few months of Goethe's death at the age of 81 (1832), there emerges a different point of view, more in harmony with the leading thought of the *Confessions*, namely that in a world of error and illusion, redemptive power is to be sought in heavenly love and in the service of man. Nevertheless this religious thought seems to have little or no relation to the very prosaic *dénoûment* of Faust's career. Indeed, Goethe's want of religion so colours his whole view of life that even "his optimism has pessimism in the background."[2]

To sum up this discussion: Augustine's work is conspicuous in its entire originality. It is not a formal treatise on psychology nor an abstract inquiry into the nature of the soul; it is not like the *Meditations* of M. Aurelius the outcome of mere moralizing self-analysis; it is not like the *Faust* of Goethe, the utterance of ineffectual yearnings or the pursuit of unattainable ideals. It is simply the living picture of a human soul—in its moods of abasement and exaltation, in the bitterness of its moral struggles, in the ardour of a spiritual quest, in the peace and joy of a supreme discovery.

[1] *Ibid.* p. 113.

[2] Martensen, *Christian Ethics* (General) pp. 169–173. For a sketch of the second part of Faust see G. H. Lewes, *The Life of Goethe*, bk. vii., ch. 7. (pp. 541 foll.).

It has the distinction, the charm, the undying interest of a personal self-disclosure, a personal discovery of God. And in great measure the book owes its charm to its transparent sincerity. Like the penitents in primitive times who publicly confessed their guilt in the presence of the assembled Church,[1] so Augustine lays bare the very secrets of his heart. True, he looks at the past through the opinions and impressions of a later stage in his career, but he lays himself out to give a wholly faithful and honest picture of his soul's history.

2. In regard to the style of the *Confessions*, it is enough to say that it closely corresponds to the general aim and subject-matter of the book. Augustine has to find diction and imagery appropriate to the high task of sustained converse with God; in other words, fitted for the work of prayer; for prayer, according to a Platonist maxim, is "converse" with the divine: or in the language of Clement of Alexandria *ὁμιλία πρὸς τὸν θεόν*.[2] We cannot wonder that in order to learn the language of prayer Augustine, the trained rhetorician, is driven to put himself to school, so to speak, with the Psalmists and with St. Paul. Thus it seems to be almost an impertinence to appraise what is really the language of the heart. It must, however, be conceded that the *Confessions* are marred here and there by extravagances of diction, by discussions which are over-subtle and unprofitable, by faults of taste and misplaced rhetoric. We must bear in mind that Augustine wrote at a period of somewhat degraded taste; and he himself, in proportion to the seriousness of his search for truth, came to feel that his rhetorical training was a hindrance rather than a help. When he read Cicero's *Hortensius* as a youth of nineteen, he began to doubt the value of the discipline he had

[1] Cp. Boissier, *op. cit.*, 341: "He remembered that in the primitive Church grave sins were publicly confessed and he wished to be like .... those pious penitents."

[2] *Strom.* 7. 7. 39. So. Greg Nyss. *de Orat.* 1. 715 A. Cp. Max. Tyr., *Diss.* xi. 8 quoted by Dill, *Rom. Soc. from Nero to M. Aurelius*, p. 395 note.

undergone in the schools;[1] and as time went on, he became impatient of the unreality and hollowness of his professional work. He tells us how ardently he longed to withdraw the service of his tongue from the "markets of verbosity"; from the "lying follies" of forensic disputation; from the professorial *cathedra mendacii* (9. 2. 2. and 4). Only in the Bible could he discover language and imagery adequate to his need. Doubtless, as a trained rhetorician, he always retained a certain feeling for grace and correctness in the use of language. From childhood onwards he had yielded himself to the magical spell of Vergil, and he had diligently studied Cicero as a supreme master of vigorous and elegant style.[2] "Words," he allows, "are elect and precious vessels of thought," but they are too often filled with "the wine of error" (1. 16. 26) and truth after all is infinitely more important than the form in which it is enshrined. On the whole, in spite of many pregnant aphorisms, many striking terms of expression, and an inexhaustible fecundity of diction, Augustine is not conspicuous for what we should call a fine literary style. In this respect some will think that he is far surpassed by his fellow countryman Tertullian.[3] But in sincerity of thought, vivid description, depth of feeling, lyrical fervour, spiritual insight and true unction, he stands pre-eminent among religious writers of any age. The literary form of his work, whatever be its merits or defects, cannot conceal from us the individuality of the man

[1] As Dr. Bigg says "Cicero, the prince of rhetoricians, weaned Augustine from the love of rhetoric" (*The Confessions*, p. 14).

[2] As to Vergil see *Conf.* 1. 13; *de civ.* 1. 3. In *Epist. ad Rom. expos.* 3 Vergil is spoken of as "in Romana lingua nobilissimus." Cicero is described in *c. advers. legis* as: "Vir eloquentissimus et verborum vigilantissimus appensor et mensor." See also *de magist.* 5. 16. Other classical writers quoted by Augustine in the *Conf.* and elsewhere are Terence, Horace, Lucretius, Persius, Juvenal, Seneca. On the style of the *Confessions* see more in the Additional Note at the end of the chapter. On the place of rhetoric in ancient education, see Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, no. 4 "Greek and Christian Rhetoric."

[3] On Tertullian's style see a striking passage from R. W. Evans, *Biography of the Early Church* vol. 1. 336–8 quoted by Mayor, *Tertull. Apol.* introd. xiv.

himself. He tells us in the *de doctrina* that the eloquence of the sacred writers consists in the perfect adaptation of their style and diction to the themes of which they speak.[1] We may think that his own style owes its persuasiveness and force to the fact that more and more he became steeped in the language of the Scriptures. Those writings, the rugged and unadorned style of which contrasted so unfavourably as he formerly thought with the *Tulliana dignitas*, he came to regard as the very models of true eloquence (3. 5. 9). God (he sometimes says) is to be thought of as *magis morum quam verborum pulcritudinem quaerens atque munditiam.*[2]

3. From the style of Augustine we pass to a brief consideration of the general character—the *ethos* or tone—of the *Confessions*. They are to be regarded as a book of devotion, and we have noticed the spirit of restfulness which pervades the whole work. It has been well said that "the general impression made by the book is as when, after a gloomy day of rain, the sun is conqueror at last, and a mild radiance illuminates the drenched landscape."[3] The heart of the writer, hitherto troubled like a storm-tost lake, seems to lie like the sea of glass before the throne, reflecting in its crystal surface the radiance of the far-off heavens. The book has been compared to the *de imitatione*, to the *Pensées* of Pascal, to Law's *Serious Call*: but it has a distinct character of its own in so far as it is the record of an agonizing moral struggle which now is at an end. It depicts each stage of the upward ascent; it does not merely dwell on present peace but traces the footprints of eternal love and wisdom in the chequered history of the sorrowful past. The spirit is that of Whittier's tender lines in *My Psalm:*

Enough that blessings undeserved
Have marked my erring track;
That wheresoe'er my feet have swerved
His chastening turned me back;—

[1] *de doct.* 4. 6. [2] *c. advers. leg.* 1. 52. Harnack, in *A.K.* p. 13.

That more and more a providence
Of love is understood
Making the springs of time and sense
Sweet with eternal good;—

That all the jarring notes of life
Seem blending in a psalm;
And all the angles of its strife
Slow rounding into calm.

So, as Augustine looks back, he is filled with the spirit of "perpetual benediction." "I was travelling," he says, "along the broad road of the world, and Thou didst not forsake me" (6. 5. 8). "For Thy omnipotence is not far from us even when we are far from Thee" (2. 2. 3).

We may speak of the *Confessions* as a book of devotion because it has those four characteristics of "true devotion" which Bishop Wilson sets down at the beginning of his *Sacra Privata*. It is a book of prayer, for it is wholly addressed to God. Its tone is that of a profound humility: the writer is overwhelmed by the sense of his own weakness and need. It is the utterance of absolute faith in the divine power to heal and bless; and finally it is a confession of the vanity of all earthly things that either lead not to God or distract the soul from Him. Augustine's experience, in short, like that of Justin Martyr, is an illustration of the parable of the Pearl—indeed, he himself says, speaking of his newly-found faith, *Inveneram iam bonam margaritam.*[1] He had wandered far in strange places: he had looked for satisfaction in creatures and had been *sent empty away*. "I could find," he tells us, "neither light nor rest; I carried about a torn and bleeding soul, yet could discern no place to lay it down. In pleasant groves, amid sports or songs, or plats of flowers: in sumptuous banquets, in the alcove or on the bed of ease, in books and poetry, there was no peace" (4. 7. 12). He had explored the mysterious depths of his own personality; he had sought for light in different systems of human philosophy: but only in

[1] *Conf.* 8. 1. 2. Cp. Possidius, *Vita Aug.*, xxxi.: "Erat autem . . . unus negotiatorum qui inventam pretiosam margaritam, quae habebat venditis, comparavit," etc.

God Himself could he discover the truth to be a living Presence which had walked with him throughout his wanderings and had led him onwards towards the light of life. "I find no place for my soul," he says, "but in Thee, in whom all my scattered faculties are made one" (10. 40. 65). Thus like the lost son of the parable he came to himself: and, in finding himself, found God.

It would be scarcely possible to over-estimate the influence of St. Augustine upon religious thought during the centuries which have intervened between him and us. He was the spiritual ancestor of Gregory the Great, of Anselm and the Schoolmen, of Bernard and the Mystics. Whether we look at the imposing system of theology which culminates in the *Summa* of Aquinas, at the writings of the Mystics, or at the various reforming movements which paved the way for the upheaval of the sixteenth century; or whether we consider the ideal of a *Civitas Dei* to be realized on earth which was cherished by the medieval Papacy: we shall find the spirit of Augustine everywhere active and bearing fruit. The Roman Church with true instinct commemorates the conversion of Augustine as an event only less epoch-making than the conversion of St. Paul.[1] Augustine's influence, again, may be traced in the Renaissance and in the Reformation itself. "Augustine, the father of Roman Catholicism is at the same time the only patristic writer of the Church from whom Luther actually learned, whom the Humanists reverenced as a hero."[2] In the seventeenth century he was appealed to as a champion of Protestantism.[3] But I think that the famous book we

[1] In the collect and gospel for the feast of St. Monnica (May 4). The collect mentions Augustine's conversion as a proof of divine acceptance of his mother's "pious tears"; the Gospel (from St. Luke vii.) is the account of the raising of the widow of Nain's son: *Et resedit qui erat mortuus et coepit loqui. Et dedit illum matri suae.*

[2] Harnack, *A.K.* p. 6.

[3] *e.g.* in a book by William Crompton (of B.N.C. Oxford), "Preacher of God's word" at Little Kimble, Bucks, entitled *St. Austin's Religion: wherein is manifestly proved out of the workes of that Learned Father, who liued neere twelve hundred yeares before the time of Luther, that he differed from Poperie and agreed with the Religion of the Protestants*

have been reviewing brings Augustine very near to ourselves. For certainly one characteristic of our age is a growing desire for a theology that is at once positive, strong and simple. There are signs of reaction, both from the ultra-dogmatic temper of an earlier time and from the exclusively critical temper which was so marked a feature of the latter half of the nineteenth century. There is a tendency towards mysticism of the practical kind; that is,to a belief in a God who by His Spirit works in men and with them, and who in response to a living faith is able and willing to manifest Himself in new ways, corresponding to our present needs and capacities.

The late Dr. du Bose observes that, in these days "the mysticism we want is that of St. Paul,"[1] and we have seen that Augustine's revived mysticism is of the Pauline type: he has insight into the very heart of religion in so far as he thinks of God as the *vita vitarum*, the source of all fresh springs of inspiration and all gifts of grace which, manifested in human character and personality, are tending to bring near the kingdom of God.

We ask then, finally, what special teaching Augustine's book has for ourselves.

1st. We seem to learn from Augustine's example that the truth of which man is in quest must correspond to the whole of life. Augustine is led to realize this by the very method he pursues in his inquiry: the method which consists in honestly facing the facts of his own inner life. He investigates his own nature: he studies his development from childhood to manhood: he takes account of all the feelings, impulses, aims,

in all the mayne poynts of Faith and Doctrine: contrary to that Impudent, Erronious and Slanderous position of the bragging Papists of our times who falsely affirme wee had no Religion before the times of Luther and Calvine (London, 1624).

The book was re-issued with an additional treatise: *St. Austin's Summes: or the Summe of St. Austin's Religion collected verbatim from his undoubted writings.* This work was brought to the notice of James I. and was the occasion of some proceedings mentioned by Abp. Laud in his *Diary* (Dec. 21, 1624).

[1] *Liberal and Mystical Writings of William Law*, pref. pp. xiii.–xv.

aberrations which have determined or affected his conduct and character. In this scrutiny he follows the method of the physiologist and the physician.[1] He is a patient observer of facts which the philosopher might ignore. He studies the phenomena of infancy and childhood: tears and laughter: the beginnings of speech, of self-consciousness, of imitation: the characteristics of boyhood and adolescence: the reaction of education on character: the awakening of curiosity and of the life of sense; the growth of will and intelligence: the overmastering power of fleshly desire: the perversion or misdirection of love. He has the same keen eye for the facts of student life: for the hollowness of pretentious teachers: for the unrealities, the vanities, the trivial ambitions of the professional rhetorician. But chiefly he is concerned with the hidden tendencies of his own heart: with the conflict of emotions, the division of mind, the duality of will which had for so long a time paralysed him and held him back from inward peace. And all this close and scrupulous observation of the facts of life, as they presented themselves to him, prepared the way for the great discovery that one only power can bring the conflicting elements of human nature into a state of harmony. Augustine brings to God his whole personality, disorganized and diseased as it is, that it may find healing and satisfaction in all that God is—all that He bestows. The truth which he seeks must leave nothing essential to man's being unexplained: no impulse unaccounted for or suffered to waste itself in fruitless effort. Doubtless he was familiar with the maxim of Aristotle ἡ φύσις οὐδὲν μάτην ποιεῖ. He cannot conceive that any single element in human nature is void of significance, or fails to find its explanation in the purposes of divine wisdom.

Thus in his reverence for fact, his passion for reality, Augustine anticipates to a certain extent the temper of a scientific age. There is a passage in the sixth book (6. 4. 5) in which he deplores the short-sighted dogmatism of his unbelieving youth. "I ought," he says sorrowfully, "to have knocked and in-

[1] Cp. Harnack, *A.K.* p. 8.

quired: not scornfully to have impugned what I imagined was believed [by the Church]. Thus the gnawing perplexity I felt as to what might still be held as certain, was aggravated by a sense of shame that I had for so long a time been mocked and deceived by the promise of certainty and had babbled with childish petulance of uncertainties as if they were certain: while I was blindly accusing Thy catholic Church which after all did *not* teach what I so vehemently denounced." He learned in fact through his errors what he never afterwards forgot: the need of humility; of the childlike spirit, which whether in the acquisition of secular knowledge or in the pursuit of religious truth, patiently puts itself to school with facts: the facts of nature and of the moral life. Only thus could he discover how many-sided is God's revelation of Himself: how vain and barren is all effort that has not God for its end: how exact and complete is the response of divine truth to the varied needs and aspirations of the human soul. For God alone is the goal of man's pilgrimage, the satisfying object of desire. *Ipse finis desideriorum nostrorum.*[1]

2. Augustine's book also suggests the reflexion that the highest perfection of which man is capable consists in singleness of personality: in the simplicity of a nature which is at one with itself.

Augustine learned this truth in the school of Platonism, and his own sorrowful experience led him to realize the vital part which *will* plays in the process of unification. He knew the misery of that inward dualism in which flesh and spirit are at war,[2] and he learned the lesson that the principle of unity in man is a God-directed, God-centred will. "For," he says, "to arrive at the goal is nothing else than *willing* to go, but willing strongly and whole-heartedly" (*velle ire, sed velle fortiter et integre*). "We are on our upward way to the peace of Jerusalem. It is good will that has set us there, in order that we may will nothing else than to abide there for ever" (8. 8. 19; 13. 9. 10).

[1] *de civ.* 22. 30. 1.

[2] See esp. *Conf.* 8. 5. 10, 9. 21, 10. 22; 12. 16. 23.

In this view of the will as the great factor in bringing about unity or singleness of personality we find a link between the mystical and the practical aspects of religion. The idea of the unification of man's nature is characteristic of mysticism whether Pagan or Christian. We find it in Plotinus as well as in Thomas à Kempis: but the Christian view is that it is compunction that brings man into unity with himself. "Happy is he who can cast off all distracting impediments, and gather himself into the unity of holy compunction."[1] And this, because in penitence and conversion a man comes to *himself* and dedicates his will to goodness; the redemption of manhood virtually means its unification through the liberation of the *will*. This truth is implied in Augustine's very emphatic language about the will. "Where," he asks in book IX, "where, during all that prolonged time, was my free-will and from what hidden recess was it called forth in a moment?" (9. 1. 1). No doubt he owed much to his diligent study of the Bible. In the teaching of Scripture a belief in free-will is everywhere pre-supposed: it corresponds to the belief in divine retribution, and it leads logically to the view of sin not merely as disease, but as rebellion. The Manichaeans and Gnostics were to all intents and purposes fatalists, while even Platonism makes little of the will, and scarcely distinguishes it from instinctive desire—whether for knowledge or for pleasure.[2] Only in the Gospel—in the attitude of our Lord towards human nature—do we find due importance assigned to the will; and the outcome of Augustine's long spiritual struggle was the discovery that singleness of mind and purpose consists in the right direction of this central faculty in personality. *In bona voluntate,* he says, *pax nobis est* (13. 9. 10). Just as aversion from God involves the dissipation of a man's faculties (2. 1. 1; 8. 5. 10), so conversion is the recovery of singleness; in correspondence with the unity of God and the unity of truth and of ethical Good, the whole man

[1] *de imit.* 1. 21. 2. Cp. C. Bigg, *The Spirit of Christ in Common Life*, p. 63; J. Smith, *Discourses*, p. 414.

[2] C. Bigg, *Neo-Platonism*, p. 155–156.

becomes one.[1] He attains to the simplicity of a nature wholly at one with itself: and this "atonement" is the very crown and climax of personality.

3. This thought may be somewhat extended. The idea of "singleness" of personality may lead us to consider the need and the meaning of simplicity in religion, that of which the religious instinct in all ages is in search.

Now the very life of religion depends upon an elemental conception of God as a living *Person* face to face with man's personality. Religion is, in fact, a relationship between persons; it demands the response of human personality, with all its faculties of thought, affection, will, to infinite personality; it implies the self-surrender of person to person: "a surrender" (says Baron von Hügel) "to be achieved not in some *thing* but in some *one*—a some one who *is* at all, only inasmuch as he is living, loving, growing: and to be performed, not towards some thing, but towards some One, whose right, indeed whose very power to claim me, consists precisely in that He is Himself absolutely, infinitely and actually, what I am but derivatively, finitely and potentially."[2] Personality in fact is a complex and a growing thing. You cannot secure simplicity as men have sometimes attempted to do by ignoring all sides of your personality but one. Religion does not appeal to emotion only, intellect only or will only. If it undervalues knowledge; if like the early Puritanism it seeks to "disgrace reason"; if it is obscurantist in its hostility to criticism or blindness to history, it attains a false simplicity at the expense of reality. So again the mystical temper must, as von Hügel expresses it, "nobly bend under the yoke" of sacramental and institutional religion if it is to escape from the tyranny of mere feeling and emotion.[3] All one-sidedness

[1] Cp. *Conf.* 10. 29. 40. "Per continentiam quippe colligimur et redigimur in unum, a quo in multa defluximus." J. Smith, *Discourses*, p. 414 refers to the maxim of Pythagoras (quoted by Clem. Alex.), Δεῖ καὶ τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἕνα γένεσθαι. Cp. W. H. Moberly in *Foundations*, p. 500.

[2] F. von Hügel, *The Mystical Element of Religion*, vol. 1, pp. 72, 73.

[3] *Ibid.* p. 74.

in the attempt to gain simplicity is doomed to fail; in a word, religion must do justice to the many sidedness of man's nature and constitution.

Simplicity in religion, then, is the fruit of a two-fold conviction:

(1) First, that God Himself—not His gifts—is the one object of human aspiration. In what He is—not in what He gives—does the true life of the soul consist. Augustine himself is full of this thought. "One being," he writes, "we seek, than whom nothing more simple exists: therefore in simplicity of heart let us seek Him." [1]

Again, "The believer," he says, "possesses all things in cleaving to Thee whom all things serve" (5. 4. 7), "He gives thee to enjoy not any of the things He has created but Himself: His own self, the creator of all things." [2] Religion consists in love and prayer and aspiration because it means a continuous and permanent relationship to one only Being—to God Himself. It means the habit of passing upward and onward through the bewildering multiplicity of outward things to Him Who is the home of man's spirit. It prizes, but not unduly exalts, the ordinances of the Church. The gifts of Christ in the Church—the food of the Eucharist, the open Bible, the gift of absolution, the privilege of common worship, the grace of fellowship in prayer and service: all these have but one aim, namely to unite the soul to God Himself, leading it to apprehend in Him the one supreme and only Good.

(2) Once more, simplicity is the fruit of a consciousness that in every rightly-directed activity of mind or spirit, God Himself is present: in other words, that in the employment of every faculty man must *depend* on God. Physical, moral and intellectual endowments of whatever kind serve as instruments of the dedicated will, and simplicity consists not in undervaluing or disparaging any gift of nature but in recognizing that it comes from God, and is to be exercised in continual dependence upon Him. As Richard Hooker wisely says, "Unto His

[1] *de vera rel.*, 35. 65.

[2] *Serm.* 259 *in octav. pasch.* 3. Cp. *Conf.* 12. 16. 23.

glory even these things are done which we naturally perform, and not only that morally and spiritually we do. For by every effort, proceeding from the most concealed instincts of nature, His power is made manifest." [1] A man is most truly and completely himself when he submits all his varied functions and activities to the guidance and inspiration of the Light that lighteth every man. He is then most alive when his will is most intensely co-operating with the grace of God. *Gloria Dei vivens homo* is the noble maxim of Irenaeus. "We beseech Thee to make us living men: grant that this Church may be a living and clean Church" is the far-reaching prayer of a fourth-century bishop, Sarapion of Thmuis.

We have thus endeavoured to analyze the idea of "simplicity in religion," and we may claim that it corresponds to Augustine's own conception of religion. He understood it to be a relationship between two persons: on the one side *himself*—his personality as it had been moulded and developed by education, by mental training, by his fellowship with the Church, by the vicissitudes of life awakening in him the sense of dependence on Another, the consciousness of sin, the instinct of self-surrender; on the other side, *God*: manifesting Himself in the glory of nature and in the mystery of providence; in the energies of thought and the ventures of reason; in the actual order of human society and the gifts of civilization. He thinks of God as responding wholly to the whole need of humanity. The same thought is expressed in a well-known passage of St. Bernard: "He who satisfies the desire of the soul with good things—even He will be to the reason fullness of light, to the will the multitude of peace, to the memory the unbroken continuance of eternity. O blessed and beatific Trinity! to Thee my miserable trinity miserably sighs, since it wanders an unhappy exile from Thee." [2]

[1] Hooker, *Eccl. Pol.* 2. 2. 1. Cp. *Doc. of Incarn.*, p. 5: "As all objects of human thought—all laws scientific, moral, social, artistic—are ideas of the Logos, so all right exercise of human faculties depends upon His enabling presence."

[2] *in Cant.*, 11. 5.

Such was Augustine's idea of religion—an idea which seems to be presupposed in his contention that "Christianity" is only the latter-day name of a creed which has always existed in the world. "The thing which is now called 'Christian religion'" he says in the *Retractations*, "existed among the ancients: nor was it ever absent even from the beginning of human history until the time when Christ came in the flesh; from which circumstance the true religion which already was in existence derived its appellation of 'Christian.'"[1] These words seem to illustrate the point on which I have insisted: viz. that simplicity consists, first, in making God Himself the one unchanging object of man's devotion; secondly, in regarding all human faculties and instincts as good and precious in proportion as they are exercised in dependence on God.

In our effort to recover this eternal "simplicity" of faith we are not left without witness, nor without guidance.

There is life itself, with its discipline of failure, sorrow, disillusionment; life with its unmerited gifts and blessings; its opportunities of spiritual growth, of renewal, of deeper and larger insight into reality.

There is the Bible with its unchanging message of a God who summons man to a fellowship of love with Himself; of a God who reveals Himself as the one Teacher and Master in "the school of the heart."[2]

There are philosophers and poets, Pagan or Christian—those "just men" who, whatever be their period or place in history,

[1] *Retract.* 1. 13. 3. Cp. a remark by Nairne in *The Meaning of the Creed*, p. 59: "Happily there is no such word as 'Christianity' in Holy Scripture. Holy Scripture is full of Christ and Truth and Love and Life: the Eternal Person with His eternal attributes. There has never been a time or place where He was not. Nor has any religion worthy of the name at all, been wholly without Him."

[2] *Conf.* 13. 15. 17: "Non novi, Domine, non novi alia tam casta eloquia quae sic mihi persuaderent confessionem et lenirent cervicem meam jugo tuo, et invitarent colere te gratis." In 9. 9. 21 occurs the phrase "schola pectoris."

"belong" as Augustine says, "to the New Testament" (*ad novum pertinent Testamentum*); those who bear witness to the central truth of spiritual religion, *In Him we live and move and have our being.*[1] Finally there are the saints; those, like St. Paul or St. Augustine, who have set before themselves a single purpose in life: namely, fellowship with God in desire and thought, in spirit and judgment, in will and work. In this singleness of aim the saints of every age are essentially alike, widely as they are parted one from another in their circumstances, their opportunities of service, and the claims made upon them by their generation. Doubtless they with their fuller knowledge of the mind of God, watching our struggle with "larger, other eyes then ours" pray that we may be able to apprehend with them what is *the length and breadth and height and depth* of the love revealed in Christ: of the peace that flows from union with God.

With a comprehensive prayer for the divine gift of understanding Augustine ends his *Confessions*: "O Thou the supreme Good which hath need of no other good, Thou art ever at rest, since Thou Thyself art Thine own rest (*semper quietus es, quoniam tua quies tu ipse es*). And who among men shall impart to man the power to understand this? Of Thee, let it be asked, in Thee let it be sought, at Thy door let man knock. So, so only, shall it be received, so shall it be found, so shall the door be opened."[2]

[1] *c. Faust.* 22. 84; cp. *de vera rel.*, 3. 3.
[2] *Conf.*, 13. 38. 53.

ADDITIONAL NOTE

THE STYLE OF THE *CONFESSIONS*

ST. AUGUSTINE'S thoughts on style and eloquence, as applied especially to Christian preaching, may be found in the *de doctrina* bk. iv. He disclaims any intention to produce a treatise on rhetoric, the rules of which may be learned elsewhere but must neither be neglected nor over-rated. The book was apparently finished about 427, some three years before Augustine's death, when he had perhaps learned by experience that more depends upon the personality of the preacher than upon his art. He had formerly disparaged the "style" of the Scriptures as contrasted with the *Tulliana dignitas* (*Conf.*, 3. 5. 9), but we must remember that he studied them in a rude Latin version, produced not by men of literary skill but by devout Christians only anxious to give the sense of the original. "Only imagine," says M. Boissier (*La Fin du Paganisme*, 2. 351) "what an admirer of Virgil, a pupil of Cicero, must have suffered when plunged abruptly into the midst of this mere barbarism. Augustine was repelled by it, and abandoning the works which outraged all the sensibilities of his taste, he hastened to resume his favourite authors and to return to his former studies." In the *de doc.* iv. he has much to say in praise of the sacred writers and illustrates different modes of diction from the epistles of St. Paul (iv. 20). He allows that even the prophets were "not without skill in poetry, which is the most perfect school of rhythm." There is a "grand" manner which can dispense with rhetorical devices. Quoting Galatians iv. 10 foll. Augustine says, "Have we here words placed antithetically or in any ascending scale, or any music of clauses or periods? Yet this does not chill that ample emotion (*grandis affectus*) with which we feel his words are glowing."

The entire sincerity of tone and feeling which pervades the *Confessions* prepares us for a comparative neglect of rhetorical art. This is the more remarkable because he wrote in an age "when after centuries of rhetoric and tyranny mankind seemed almost as incap-

able of speaking the truth as of seeking it."[1] Nevertheless the effects of Augustine's long training in rhetoric are manifest. The *Confessions* are not free from instances of false taste, forced antitheses, assonance, balanced clauses, rhyming terminations, and other rhetorical devices. This may be illustrated by a few instances:

Metuebam credere in carne natum, ne credere cogerer ex carne inquinatum (5. 10. 20).

Veritatem nondum adeptum sed falsitati iam ereptum (6. 1. 1).

Depuduit vanitati et erubuit veritati (8. 2. 4).

Plus in me valebat deterius inolitum quam melius insolitum (8. 11. 25).

Amant eam lucentem, oderunt eam redarguentem (10. 23. 34).

Occasionally Augustine plays upon words of similar sound: *e.g. peritus* and *periturus, disertus* and *desertus.*

On the whole, however, the rhetorical instinct is more or less restrained in the *Confessions.* It shows itself chiefly in striking and unusual expressions, and in a wealth of imagery which is partly due to Augustine's habit of observation. He took a keen interest in natural phenomena. "It was the harvest of eye and ear which provided him with such a wealth of imagery wherewith to illustrate the inner life."[2] It was his rhetorical instinct that enabled him to depict so vividly what he saw and to express his thought in epigrammatic form. He is fond of *oxymora*: e.g. ubera deserta eremi; superba deiectio; inquieta lassitudo; firmitas nostra . . . cum nostra est, infirmitas est, etc. But he excels chiefly in pregnant descriptions (e.g. 8. 5. 10, the wonderful description of the gradual growth of habit) and in metaphors compressed into a single phrase: e.g. abyssus humanae conscientiae; flumen moris humani; albescit veritas; regina colorum lux; fuderam in arenam animam meam; memoria quasi venter est animi; campi et lata praetoria memoriae meae; nundinae loquacitatis; ex amissa vita morientium mors viventium; exaudiens cardinem desiderii eius; schola pectoris; dealbatiores vias saeculi; quotidiana fornax nostra humana lingua; majorum nugae negotia vocabantur; consuetudinis sarcina; rarissima dissensione condire consensiones plurimas; pretiosorum poculorum decentissimus ministrator (of Faustus); haesitans mori morti et vitae vivere, etc.

[1] T. R. Glover, *Life and Letters in the Fourth Century*, ch. vii., p. 197. Cp. the remark (on p. 11), "All these studies [Philosophy, History, Natural Science] were overshadowed by the baleful rhetoric, infecting everything with pretentious unreality, as every system of education will that teaches style first and forgets nature."

[2] Gibb and Montgomery. *The Confessions of Augustine*, p. 318 (on *Conf.* 10. 35. 57).

On the whole, it is difficult to think that the *Confessions* display conscious art. Augustine is intensely eager to win the sympathy and interest of his readers and what he says of the good preacher is true of himself as author of the *Confessions*. "Our eloquent man takes pains, when he is speaking what is righteous, holy and good—he takes all the pains he can to be heard with intelligence, with pleasure and with obedience: and let him not doubt that he can attain this object, so far as he is able to attain it at all, rather through the devoutness of his pleading with God than through the professional pleader's skill, so that, praying for himself and for those whom he is to address, he must be a pleader before he is a speaker (*orator ante quam dictor*)."[1] The *Confessions* are for the most part addressed to Almighty God, and Augustine must instinctively have felt that "eloquence" was beside the mark. His language is that of the heart: but in describing his various experiences he falls into habits of phraseology which had been familiar to him from youth. He is absorbed in his subject and he writes with the simplicity and directness of a man who desires above all things to *be* himself and to *reveal* himself as he is. As he says (10. 2. 2): Tibi ergo, Domine, manifestus sum quicumque sim, et quo fructu tibi confitear dixi. Neque enim id ago verbis carnis et vocibus sed verbis animae et clamore cogitationis quem novit auris tua.

In a word, the style of the *Confessions* is regulated partly by the writer's purpose, partly by unconscious habits of literary composition which were the fruit of his past training. The fact is that "the rhetorical training worked itself into the very nature of those who had undergone it, Pagan and Christian alike; they may be careless, verbose, involved, even (as Cyprian is) at times ungrammatical; but they instinctively employ the tricks of their trade; their terminal rhythms in particular, fall without an effort into the accepted forms."[2]

[1] *de doct.* iv. 15. As to Augustine's literary style see Ed. Norden, *Die Antike Kunstprosa*, band 2 (Leipzig, 1898).

[2] E. W. Watson in *Classical Review*, 1901 p. 65. Cp. Hatch, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 30 foll.

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